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## **SHANMUKHA**

### IN FOCUS

SHANMUKHA wishes all its dear Readers, Contributors, Advertisers and Well Wishers a very Happy New Year and Pongal, and looks forward to encouragement in its indepth study and perpetuation of excellence in Fine Arts.

In its efforts to widen its horizon SHANMUKHA brings to its readers well researched medico-musical essay "Music & Brain" by eminent neurologists who believe in 'Nadopasana's prospects of miracles which defy medical expectations.

In another essay, 'Raga For Roga', a music enthusiast agonises over our woeful inaction on Music Therapy which holds great promise and quotes copious authorities and instances in favour.

"Onre Kulam Oruvane Devan" forms the theme of Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati's "Aathichoodi Ilam Pirai" and a music couple evaluates the theme and tunes the lyrics.

The issue presents a translation of Swati Tirunal's Ramayana Ragamalika "Bhavayami Raghuramam".

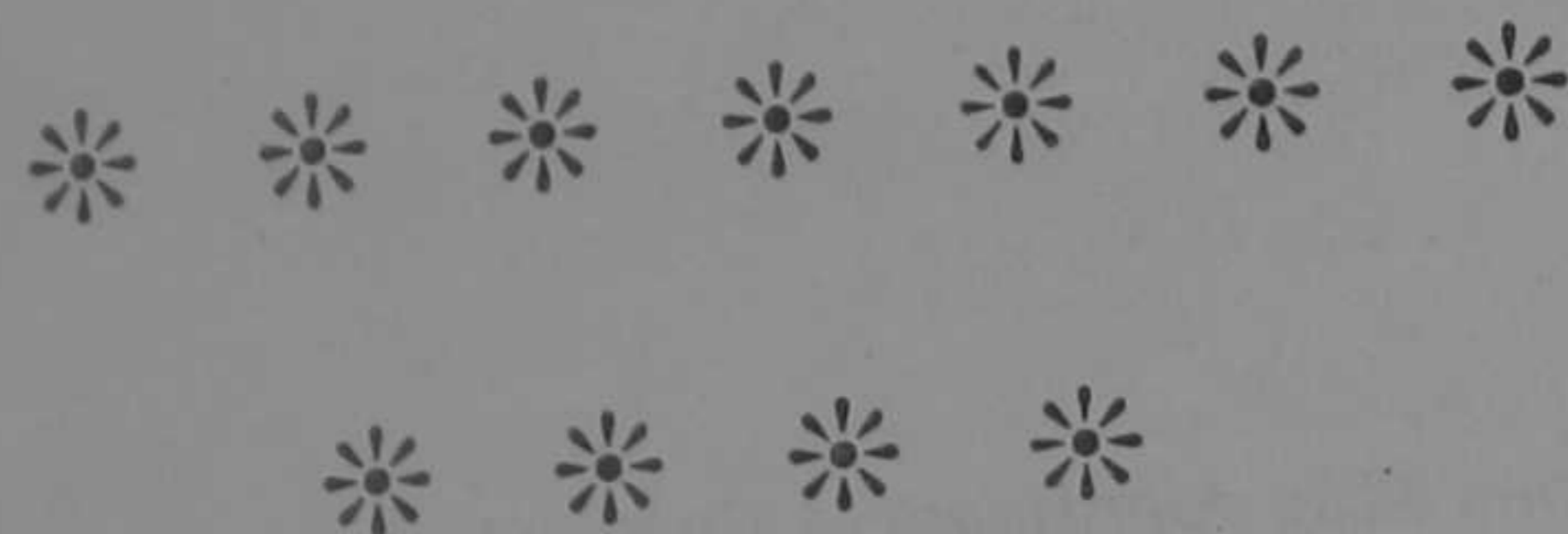
Songs are songs and stones are stones. But the Gujri Mahal at Gwalior has a different story to tell. A story "a symphony in stone", a marvel in music and architecture, giving birth to many a new Raag. SHANMUKHA regales the readers with the extravaganza.

That music was a source of national integration as early as the 18th century, the Golden Era of Karnatak music, and not the 'prerogative' of our generation is brought to light in a clipping found in the archives of an artiste.

Besides, the issue contains 'Golden' Finale, 'The Fragrant Garland' and such other reviews on the cultural front and the flute maestro Sangeetha Kalanidhi's Reminiscences.



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## Music And The Brain

(With special reference to Indian Classical Music)

By N. Subbalakshmy & Prof. K. Srinivas\*

It is over these past seven years that we have attempted formulating our concepts regarding the Indian system of music and brain function. As neurologists we have not stopped marvelling at the working of the human brain and its unfathomable limits. Normal brain function is often taken for granted, but a neurological deficit suddenly brings to focus what was there originally and what is missing now and the repercussions of this deficit to the patient.

Our claim to basic knowledge of music is that we were nurtured in the Indian cultural milieu with the keenness of interest in this direction honed by sustained family involvement with music. Brushing up a little music theory, reading biographies of maestros, seeking the guidance of some musicians and musicologists and attending music concerts with an intent to understand more intuitively music and brain function during concert, have been part of the effort involved in bringing out this article. Brief notes on the different phases of Indian culture was thought to be necessary to provide the background for the study of the development of Indian classical music and the environmental influences on the 'musical brain'. Besides, there are certain extra musical aspects of Indian classical music which defy definition and are linked to the Indian ethos, religion and philosophy. We are aware that we have only touched the fringe in dealing with such a complex theme, inspired by MacDonald Critchley's treatise on (Western) Music and the Brain.

Let us start at the very beginning - *the evolution of the brain to reach its present state*<sup>2</sup> Man is "sapiens", the thinking species of genus 'homo', capable of judgement, planning, calculation and flights of creativity. But how did the human brain develop increasingly in its

complexity to meet the demand on it? It is believed that not just opportunity but even the original mind equipment that man has been endowed with is something special. Geshwind hypothesised that at some point in evolution, man was under extraordinary selective pressure with increase in his diverse activities and nature found it impossible to keep fitting new machinery into man's brain to meet the demands on its function and to duplicate the mechanism in the two hemispheres.<sup>3</sup>

Lateralisation of brain function occurred, so that one hemisphere (usually the left) became dominant. But the non-dominant hemisphere shares the general work load of the brain and also has specialised areas of function. The right hemisphere is known to be seat of creative activity and emotion. We will come back to this area when we discuss musical ability.

### LANGUAGE AND EXPRESSION

From the beginning *communication was a primary requirement of man*. Gesture was developed as a crude mode of communication and is phylogenetically older than speech.<sup>4</sup> With the development of language man did not discard gesture but made it blossom in an emotive and aesthetic sense into theatre, pantomime and dance. It continues to embellish, qualify and intensify the power of the spoken word! Drum beat language codes, smoke signals and pictorial writing are other steps in this communicative drive.

There is close association between language and musical expression and so a word about language development would not be out of place here. Articulate speech and the development of language have many theories. The stimulus of human interaction, communication and cultural input is essential for the development of language and for man to be

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motivated to learn. However, there is powerful testimony to the presence of linguistic skills, eager to blossom, in the minds of children. This is true of children with musical ability also as regards the learning of music. Both language and music may be pictured in terms of symbolic perception, formulation and expression, though the processing differs in each of these two modes of communication.

Man's need to communicate through musical sounds and rhythm was probably initiated by the multifarious aural stimuli from Nature and an inner urge for varied expression. The poetic allusions to Nature's music abound in Kalidasa's works, "Raghuvamsa" and "Kumarasambhava". He tells of 'the wind blowing through the bamboo groves, (the bamboo stem having holes in them, bared by the wanton bees) to produce "Venugana" the music of the flute'. Indian music celebrates the break of dawn and the romance of the night and ushers the change of seasons with bursts of varied melodies for each season. Even the tonal quality of each note in the musical scale is likened to Sa (Shadja) - the cry of the peacock, Ri (Rishabha) the lowing of the bull, Ga (Gandhara) - the goat's bleat, Ma (Madhyama) - the call of Krauncha bird, Pa (Panchama) - the Cukoo's call, Dha (Dhaivata) - the neighing of the horse, Ni (Nishada) - the trumpeting of the elephant, as if all music were derived from nature sounds! With the evolution of Indian classical music this served as a befitting medium for religious expression.

**What is musical ability?** The Seashore measure of musical talent attempts to score this ability, some areas of which are intangible and beyond scoring. To the neurologist musical ability must mean refined auditory discrimination, good auditory sensory and association areas of the 'brain', keen perception of musical symbols, musical memory and imagery and clean execution of motor commands for voice production or instrumental music delivery. While enjoying a favourite piece of music, does the listener pause for a moment to think that

billions of nerve cells in his head have digested the auditory signal and distilled them into the wisdom of musical perception? For the performer, as he picks up the bow to play on his Violin, thousands of calculations have set the tone of his muscles and adjusted the strength of his grip. His knowledge of the weight of the bow, the force of gravity acting, the extent of pressure to be applied, the constant feedback from the ear to the brain and back to the hands are all part of a smooth unbroken chain reaction running ahead by seconds of the music rendered! By this, we do not attempt to explain musical genius in terms of storage and retrieval of information with the clicking of so many nerve cells! Pitch, tone, timbre, rhythm, and musical imagery determine musical quality. Yet another dimension is required for music of higher order 'Bhava', the emotive aspect and 'Nadopasana' - a worshipful attitude towards the wonder that is (primeval) sound - 'Nada'. For these musical and extramusical attributes, there is no better example than the sublime music of M. S. Subbulakshmi.

### Musical Perception

The musician's brain, in the course of his long learning must build up an internal scheme of the musical symbols which he has received, registered, associated with earlier learning and when demanded, is able to retrieve it and express the same symbols through his voice or musical instrument. What we perceive comes as much from inside our head as from the world outside, says William James. It is for the performer to exteriorise this music within his head.<sup>6</sup> Musical function localisation has not been demonstrated as consistently as speech localisation to certain brain areas. But there appears to be a pattern of lateralisation, depending on the type of musical processing that is required. The left hemisphere may take a lead role when it comes to the sequencing and analytic aspects of music and the rhythmic aspects. The right hemisphere is more important in melody recognition. The areas for prosody of speech, reading music and inter-

pretation are also placed in the right hemisphere.

In a normal music situation, musical perception is dependent on both melody and rhythm and so both hemispheres must interact for music perception. Geshwind clearly states (195) that

"Although the right hemisphere may be more efficient in certain perceptual tasks, it is not dominant in the sense that the left hemisphere is dominant for speech.

Much of the knowledge of areas of brain function comes from deficits, caused by war injuries, operations, strokes; or by stimulation of brain areas to evoke responses (Penfield) and by sodium amytal injection to create temporary experimental deficits. Vascular hemispherical lesions causing aphasia (inability to speak) are most often accompanied by amusia (the loss of musical ability), (Henry Head), suggesting the close relationship between speech and music areas both of which may have similar processing requirements. Among the subcortical structures, cerebellar and basal ganglia dysfunction may lead to a different sense of rhythm. One of our patients with good musical knowledge and appreciation, who developed Alzheimer's disease, showed significant deterioration in musical ability as part of global hemispheric dysfunction. There is the medical history of an Italian music conductor who had a massive left hemisphere stroke which created deficit in his ability to read, write, speak, calculate or copy gestures, and his right hand was clumsy and weak, but he succeeded in playing on the piano the complicated music to one of Verdi's operas. It is this occasional preservation of musical ability, in the presence of speech deficit (Luria, Wernicke) that prompted a form of therapy to re-establish speech through music. This is termed Melodic Intonation Therapy and depends as much on melody as on the emotive factors and rhythm to stimulate a chain of sound, to music, to language.

*Performance praxis* is a form of therapy to recover lost musical ability and hand skills as in the case of the Violin King, Govindasamy Pillai. He suffered a serious stroke, but with some recovery, decided to go back to his violin playing, (which he did for the better part of each day and into the night) till he was back on the concert stage within a couple of months performing to packed audiences. Such dauntless courage and conviction in the power of music defies medical expectations!

Other forms of contemplative and combined *music therapy* are being introduced in India in the modern scene. Some Ragas are claimed to be particularly soothing and even remedial in medical and psychiatric conditions by the ancients. Conferences and the combined efforts of musicians, musicologists, neurologists, ENT specialists and speech therapists have helped to rethink along these lines in applied music therapy.

**Memory :-** It is not possible to undertake a simple musical piece without employing memory. Long-term memory links with old learning and short-term memory is essential for new learning. Musical memory requires the starting of auditory imagery, visual memory (for score reading) and sensorimotor plan (for instruments). Short-term memory holds a record for minutes to hours and depends on the brain's electrical activity, and is at a superficial level. Long-term memory takes over if desired and the information gets imprinted in the structure of the brain and no longer depends on the ability of nerve cells to transmit impulses to hold this memory. Synaptic connections strengthen this memory. The deepest layer of memory is emotive and words of a song help in this effort. With information thus organised, categorised, classified, with cross-indexing systems, there may be a modification for encoding and storage. Mnemonics help here. Retrieval of this modified material calls for planning, rehearsal, organisation, feed back and review. 'Overlearning' can reduce the amount of material that escapes the memory.



Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, a doyen of Karnatik music and a teacher par excellence, performing on the concert stage and 'musically intact' at 82 years, states that

"Kriti (complicated precomposed music) singing is of paramount importance. Every note, every inflection must be implanted in the voice till you can never go wrong! Repeat the song a hundred times to perfect it!"

Thus, Indian musicians learn their precision of craftsmanship through painstaking years of Guru - Sishya Parampara or close-knit family training, so carrying on the zealously guarded musical tradition. There are any number of examples of devoted Guru-Sishya learning in the South and the Charanas of North India but the concentrated talent of the Lalgudi family or the Dagar family stand out and is comparable to the Bach family in Europe. The Dagar Brothers can trace their musical lineage to over 16 generations reinforcing the view that heredity genetics plays as great a part as musical environment in promoting musical ability.

The long aural tradition is the strongest link which binds together all the types of music which may be considered as belonging to the historical beginnings of music - the Far East, India, Africa... Committing to vast tracts of memory is a skill which is virtually unknown to the modern world but the long oral tradition of India seems to have strengthened this ability in many musicians. Sarabha Sastri, who was visually handicapped, was a 'Ekasantagrddhi' i.e., with one run of a musical piece, he could memorise the song with all its nuances. Mozart was known to conduct a whole concert without the score in front of him, a most complicated exercise in orchestral and harmony - based music.<sup>8</sup> He said that he could hear a musical work as a single event, not successively, which probably means that he grasped all the temporal interrelationships of the music as a single pattern!

As opposed to Western classical music the whole system of Indian classical music has

developed along melodic lines. Our musical tradition cannot be traced to a single source, as it is the product of many layers of indigenous and foreign cultures. Music arose from the masses and classical Indian music was drawn from folk music and the Panns of the South. Persian and Moghul influence was felt in Hindustani music, while the compositions of the Trinity of Karnatak music resulted in composition - based music in the South though innovative raga - singing still holds centre stage in the South as well. The mellifluous 'Sopana Sangeeth' of Kerala and the rendering of Tevarams (in praise of Lord Siva) in Tamil Nadu retain the flavour of the older form of music, with emphasis on straight, sustained notes and few attempts of graces. Just like the regional cultural and linguistic diversity in India, the musical idiom also varies from place to place. Classical dance is a strong linking force and as Jon Higgins rightly pointed out:

Dance music is not a mere accompaniment to a dancer but rather the living source of the dance itself.

Starting from the period of the Sama Veda (Circa-1 millennium BC) the high points of Indian Classical music development are many but we can dwell on just a few here. The years 1750-1850 saw the zenith of musical excellence in India. At a time when the West produced Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, and Wagner, India's musical masterminds, the Trinity of classical music emerged in the holy soil of the Kavery bed in Tiruvarur near the cultural capital of the South, Tanjavur. Tyagaraja, immersed in devotion of Lord Rama poured forth his feelings in spontaneous melodic worship and 'Kritis' charged with affect. He expressed the deepest Indian philosophy in simple terms. When the Maharaja of Tanjore offered him the honoured post of court musician he turned it down politely with an indication of his choice of path with the immortal song 'Nidhi chala sukama, Ramuni sannidhi seva sukama? Nijamuka balku manasa' (Tell me truly my unwavering mind, is wealth pleasurable or the eternal peace of serving

Rama?) Muthuswami Dikshitar's music had the power and majesty of the Vainika (Veena player) tradition, dressed in scholarly and meaningful words, and intricate rhythmic patterns. Syama Sastri's praise of Shakthi has a rare lilting musical quality. In the North, Tansen (1506-1595) one of the Nine Gems of Akbar's court brought Dhrupad singing to its glorious heights. The Alwars, the Nayanmars, Surdas, Meerabai, Tukaram and many other composed in the 'Bhakti' (worship) mode.

Indian music demands a great deal of musical imagery and innovative ability. Within the framework of *basic grammar*, '*manodharma*' or *innovative capability*, especially in the rendering of Ragas is called for. In Raga - the music is concerned with the development of a single melodic line in its ascending and descending scale structures, displaying many facets of each single note in relation to the next in Hindustani music, characteristically the portamento, is achieved beginning with one or two notes, and the Raga extends without a break until the notes have been rounded in three octaves. The Taal (beat) is introduced of this point by way of Tabla (Kettle drum) or the Pakhwaj (two-headed drum) and the pace and tempo rises in the pretissimo style. Set compositions are also rendered with rondo or recurrent motif.

Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, another Margadarsi - path-finder of Karnatak music, who adapted it for the concert stage, felt that music should take grammar in its stride and that nothing should be done to violate the unity of the Raga, the song and the Swras (notes).

The pragmatic aspects of Indian classical music are emphasised by D. K. Pattammal in these words :

The elements of good music are simple and universal. The basic requirement is the strict adherence to the pitch and unerring observance of rhythm. Voice culture is indispensable for a vocalist. The singer must know the meaning of the (composition) text, render the song with proper feeling and emotion and pronounce the words clearly".

## Voice Production and Training

Indian writers stress that the primacy in music belongs to the human voice. It is through the voice that the union of audible sound and intellect is most subtly achieved. Voice production depends on the respiratory excursion (expiration) and the consequent build up of intrathoracic and infraglottic pressure, which must reach adequate levels to cause vibration of the vocal cords and throw it into folds. The vocal cords act like the reeds of a wind instrument by their capacity to stretch, narrowing or widening the passage between them to produce modulation in pitch, and tone. Articulation, 'voicing', and timbre call for the action of other areas like the lips, tongue, paranasal sinuses, chest, diaphragm. A great deal of our ancient concepts of voice production and voice training are based on physiological principles as followed by the West today. The voice must arise, from the Muladhara<sup>9</sup> (the lowermost pelvic psychic centre) and travel via other such centres in the stomach, chest throat in its upward journey to the head. Voice culture through basic voice exercises (as prescribed by Purandaradasa), yogic asanas (physical exercises) and Pranayama (yogic breathing exercises), the maintenance of Sruti (key note) and development of range of 2 1/2 octaves is aimed at. Meditation improves the power of concentration and a religious frame of mind (which comes naturally to the Indian musician as most composition-based classical music is religious) allows the, Bhava' to flower. Soul-stirring music transcends time and space. Voice training in Dhrupad singing (the oldest form of vocal melodic rendering) has been perfected to a fine precision. It employs Jivya', 'Santi', 'Murdhan', 'Tatva' and 'Usht' i.e., tongue, teeth, mouth, plate and lips render the song. The finest technical grasp is encouraged in the trainee to differentiate between the most minute intervals of sound and to produce it authentically. The power of vocalising carries its own emotional impact, the voice sparking off a charge which intensifies as the vocalist, percussionist, and the tambura (drone) fuse on



the heady thud of the 'Sam' (the stressed beat of the Tala to which singer, instrumentalist and percussionist must return gracefully at the end of each improvised passage). This is the moment of the complete oneness of all creation!

### Instrumental Music and Its Demands

Reference to instrumental music rendering calls for a review of primate evolution. With the specialisation of the cerebral cortex, the receiving areas allocated to the hand, face and foot (especially the nad area of the cortex) and those discharging motor commands, are disproportionately enlarged as seen in the human *homunculus representation*. This increase in size organisation and specialisation of the hand area of the brain is the leading factor in the exceptional hand dexterity of man, put to remarkable use in instrumental music playing. The internal musical scheme, mentioned earlier, is transferred to the hands of the player.

It is not possible to cover in detail the musical instruments that abound in Indian classical music, but we will touch on this area with special reference to brain hand function and the wind instrument demands. The Western Violin was adopted for Indian music around 1790 - by Balusamy Dikshitar who learnt some of the playing techniques from the British Band Players. The Indian Violinist sits cross-legged and rests the scroll-end of the Violin on the medial aspect of his ankle (which position can cause compression of the nerve and paresis). As the Violin does not have frets, the placing of the fingers has to be precise, especially as the distance between the notes of the scale become progressively less as one proceeds higher up the finger board. Imagine how much skill and practice is called for in this vesture! Glissando, sliding from one note to the other is practised by many Indian Violinists achieving very liquid notes. Pizzicato - plucking the strings with the fingers is Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan's speciality. 'Ricochet' or bouncing the bow is practised by M. S. Gopalakrish-

nan in his masterly sweep of every possible aesthetic bowing technique. At a solo performance, the Violinist is allowed more free expression of his individuality but as an accompanist to the vocalist, he must conform.

Veena holds an exalted place as the instrument played by Saraswathi, the Goddess of Learning and is considered closest to the human voice. It is equipped with two resonators of gourd or wood. There is the plucking right hand creating deflection of the string to produce the desired frequency and tonal quality while the left hand moves up and down the frets to produce the melody, Dhanammal, of a great music and dance lineage, wrought such musical magic with this instrument that she became a legend in her lifetime as the one and only "Veena Dhanammal", a title conferred upon her by popular appeal! She brought out the finest nuances of Indian classical music and the Gamakas (graces) embellished her music without much ado.

It was to capture these minutest inflections of Dhanammal's divine music, so that they are not lost to posterity, that Rangaramanuja Iyengar notated her music, and later brought out a great compendium of notated music of the Trinity of Tanjore named 10 'Krithimanimalai' in five volumes. This was no mean feat of *analysing and sequencing expertise* inspired by a rare dedication to the cause of preserving traditional classical forms in all its purity and at a time when musical notation was not yet established as a method of recording music! Was it that the left hemisphere of Rangaramanuja Iyengar (musical sequencing and rhythm) 'joined hands' with his right hemisphere (melodic perception) across the corpus callosum of the brain, to bring out this treasure-house of musical information? Other such theoretical exercises of immense value are Ramamatya's delineation of the scalar pattern and Venkatamakhi's classification of Ragas (1620). For full scope of the melodic line in Classical Karnatak music Ramamatya (1550) introduced in addition to the 7 basic notes, the

use of 5 other notes and 4 extra-ordinary notes (semitones, microtones), which formula holds to this day. The hairs breadth distinction in sound between notes can be reproduced by the maestro and probably picked up by the trained ear!

Venkatamakhi wrote the "*Chaturdandi Prakashika*" where he drew up the 11 complicated\*72 Melakarta (Parent Raga) Scheme of Karnatak music, modified in part by Govindacharya. The recent efforts of Vishnu Narain Bhatkande to classify broadly Hindustani music Ragas into ten parent Ragas is much less complex and does not cover all the Raga possibilities. By these efforts of classification many have contributed their area of expertise for the preservation of the musical form. Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan has composed a whole 'Ragamalika' (a single musical piece offered as a garland of Ragas) employing all the 72 Melakarta Ragas! Koteswara Iyer has rendered Kirtanas in all the 72 Melakarta Ragas. In modern times, Balachander on the Veena has produced audio cassette album in twelve volumes to represent the 72 Melakarta Ragas. Indian music archives have learnt to preserve these extra-ordinary contributions to our musical heritage though the oral tradition still holds sway!

Coming back to musical instruments, 12 the Hindustani Sitar' also has frets, and has thrilled audiences all over the world in the deft hands of Ravi Shankar. With Amjad Ali's expertise, the Sarod (with a wooden belly, and a parchment stretched over it, a metal finger board and no frets) music is scintillating. Among the wind instruments, the Flute (made of bamboo and an instrument of antiquity used in folk music) was brought to the concert stage in 1895 by Sarabha Sastri of Kumbakonam. The North Indian flute "Bhansuri" is twice as long and an octave lower than the Karnatak Venu. In the Indian flute the transverse hole is blown tangentially and the lips cover 1/4 of the hole through which the wind is blown. In the hands of the wizards T. R. Mahalingam or

Pannalal Ghosh, even a single phrase could pack in so much style, virtuosity, artistry, tonal quality, verve and power'. Another wind instrument, the 'Shehnai' of Bismillah fame augurs good tidings and is played on auspicious occasions. Its equivalent in the South is the Nagaswaram a much longer wood wind instrument with a large volume of dead air space which has to be filled adequately by the performer, even before any sound can be produced! It calls for tremendous vital capacity and stamina. The performer employs the throat alone or alternates throat and tongue movement to produce the music. Nagaswaram is historically linked to South Indian temple ritual and on special occasions the festive form of the presiding deity is taken on a palanquin on the circumambulatory path to the lilting tune of the 'Mallari' or 'Rakti'. Rakti is a small swara passage but a Laya' (rhythm) teaser, steeped in arithmetical intricacies and a severe test of the calibre of the performer. The percussion accompaniment to the Nagaswaram is the 'Tavil' a special two-headed drum, which employs the stick in one hand. In the hands of Valayampatti Subramaniam it produces the "rumble and roll of thunder followed by the murmur of a passive cloud". It is said that Subramaniam's father had wanted to groom him to become a Nagaswaram maestro, but his Laya genius craved for expression and at sixteen years of age he was acclaimed the 'Wonder Tavil boy'. It was only recently that the Nagaswaram and Tavil were brought to the concert stage.

The great speaking drum of Palghat Mani could utter the words and sentiments of a Tyagaraja lyric in accompaniment, when he ran his precision packed magic fingers over the two-headed South Indian Mridangam. In the hand of Alla Rakha or his son Zakir Hussain, the Tabla does not remain on the monotonous plane of mathematical breakdown of beat, but shows flights of magical rhythm and delicate touch of artistry that enhance the beauty of the musical experience. Indian music has rhythms of the most elaborate kind and an exciting

\* The 72 Melas of the Melakarta Raga Scheme form the parent Ragas having all seven swaras (notes) both in the ascending and descending scales. Each Mela Raga has the scope, by permutation and combination of Swarasthanas (Position) to form 484 Janya (kids) Ragas. So the 72 Mela Ragas have a potential to form 34776 Janya Ras. Of course this is only an arithmetical projection and not a melodic feasibility" as Shri S. Rajan tells us.



fusion is achieved between the percussive and melodic lines. Syllabi mnemonics are used to train in these various beats for drum playing.

### The Auditory System

To be able to hear the music is important to the performer and to the audience. The auditory system is marvellously arranged in a *tonographic manner* right from the inner ear to the auditory cortex of the brain. Even in the brain one can map areas of lowest tone to highest tone! This faculty diminished in Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) and he became progressively deaf from about 35 years of age. When he composed the Ninth Symphony (the greatest music) he was stone deaf. The silence without perhaps helped to internalise his musical power. He heard what musicians term the music of the inner ear'. The importance given to 'Anahat Nada' or unheard levels of sound may apply here.

### What About the Audience?

The musical appreciation is greater in an informed listener. Auditory cues may lead to correct anticipation, which gives the listener intellectual satisfaction. The unexpected in improvised music create moments of ecstasy but a foray into 'musical acrobatics' and too many surprise moves can be disturbing to the listener and defeat the purpose of music in the classical mould. Bhava the emotional content of a song can raise the audience to higher aesthetic planes. Rhythm can be compelling and encourage total audience participation in the accepted rhythm-centred stretches of the concert. Synaesthesia - regarded as a sensory overflow from the back of the neck down the spine may play a part in the musical appreciation of some. When music has spilt beyond the actual mechanics, beyond the development through a series of movements, beyond the musician as 'a' performer, with the activated audience responding and increasing the impact, when time and space stand still in the glory of Nada, then the musical experience is complete!

### The Modern Music Scenario

In the early evolution of our music, a lot of experimentation with individual notes and scales must have taken place. Fretted instruments, especially the Veena are most useful for teaching and visual demonstration of scalar intervals. On this instrument the demonstration of Tala' - the beat and Gamakas' is possible, as also playing the chord for harmony-based music. The early concept of group singing Vrinda', finds mention in our early texts. 'Vadya Vrinda', a favourite programme of archestral music on All India Radio from the 1950s was initiated by Emani Sankara Sastri, the Veena maestro. His nephew, Kama Sastri and Ravin Shankar were also active in composing and notating musical scores for archestral music in the classical mould. Though the earlier concept was only singing in unison, composing in terms of harmony-based music as in the West, was achieved later. Much of modern Indian film music is orchestrated and has immediate mass appeal. Today 'Jugalbandis' are tracing the common thread of the North-South music systems. 'Fusion music' binds East and West in the universality of music, perhaps bringing back memories of monodic sacred music and Gregorian chants to the Westerner and awakening new musical possibilities in the oriental!!.

### The Future of Classical Music - The Demands of the Modern Mind/Brain

If our music is to thrive, a number of things must change - scholarship and attitudes towards non-classical music. Only then can we keep up with a new age, different living conditions and a different pace', said flute maestro T. Viswanathan of Wesleyan University, USA, himself a traditionalist and a man of vision. He emphasised the need for analytical skills in music scholarship and use of documenting devices. Voluntary bodies like SPIC-MACAY are making efforts to increase classical music awareness in the youth. Many music academies and music research centres

all over the country are preserving the musical archives and adopting modern methods.

Human evolution is a continuing process and this great music tradition will continue in spite of change in attitudes and musical style.<sup>13</sup> Here is a music evolved, refined and sifted through 20 centuries of the arising, 30 centuries of tradition and 40 centuries of philosophical searching so old and yet so vitally in our midst today, speaking to us even in the West across vast historical and geographical distance, speaking with universal appeal", says Peggy Holroyde with great knowledge and insight Indian music is interwoven into the very fabric of Indian life. Bharata's delineation of the purpose of music in his dance and music treatise *Natya Sastra* (circa 2nd Century B.C.) will serve to further reinforce our faith in its eternal quality. In translation it reads.

"This art is not merely for your pleasure, but exhibits Bhava' for all the three worlds. I made this art form following the movement of the world, whether in work or at play, in profit, peace, laughter, battle or slaughter, yielding the fruit of righteousness to those who follow the moral law, a restraint for the unruly, a discipline for the follower of rules, sport for kings, endurance for the grief-stricken, informed with various passions of the soul, linked to the deeds of all mankind, the best, the middling and the low, affording excellent counsel, pastime and all else....!"

We thank Shri S. Rajam, musician, musicologist, artist and philosopher for reviewing the article and for his valuable comments.

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## Raga for Roga\*

By K. J. Iyengar

Lamps started flickering by themselves on their own as Saint Tyagaraja was delineating Raga Jyotiswarupini at Pudukottai.

There was a heavy downpour of rain on parched Ettayapuram as the great Muthuswami Dikshitar rendered Raga Amrutavarshini.

It would indeed be a folly to dismiss these epoch making events as mere miracles to be forgotten. These were historical facts inscribed in the annals of official recorded documents.

Even inveterate skeptics can hardly erase from our recent memory the wide newspaper coverage of a similar remarkable achievement of Violin-maestro and stormy petrel of the current Karnatak music scene, Kunnakkudi Vaidyanathan, who brought heavy showers of rain on Chennai a few years back even as it was gasping for breath without water, by no other means than bowing his Violin, standing in knee-deep water in the shores of Marina! One can ignore this feat also as a freakish accident but at considerable distortion of living history.

It has been scientifically proved in research laboratories and in the fields that even plants and animals respond effectively to the soothing strains of music - plants grow better and faster while cows yield more milk with higher fat-content on account of the beneficial influence of gentle music.

Prof. Singh of the Annamalai University had come out with startling facts and figures confirming the above in his thesis some decades ago based on extensive field experiments and studies.

All this only emphasises the fact that music is not only fine entertainment but more

importantly it has various other dimensions too for the benefit of suffering humanity at large.

The Chairman of the British Society for Music Therapy, Vidwan Muriel Warwick, lamented as follows :

Juliette Alvin's death in September 1982 at the age of 85 means the end of a remarkable era of pioneering a passionately-held belief in the therapeutic application of music based on its healing properties. Through her dedicated example and determination, she paved the way for growing recognition of music therapists working in health and education services in Britain.

India is proud of her hoary heritage of religious and spiritual *Naada Vidya* from time immemorial starting with the *Pranava Mantra* 'OM', Sama Veda chants, Sri Krishna's bewitching Venu Gana, the Goddess of Learning Saraswathi's irresistible Veena Vadan, Narada Muni teaching Sangeetha to Hanuman, the holy Nadamuni's Divya Prabanda melodies, the Trinity's enrapturing Keerthanas, etc.

Despite this glorious tradition, we are still amateurs in the important field of a systematic scientific research and study and, above all, the salutary practice of the art of Music Therapy as understood in the most advanced modern world. We have had no Society for Music Therapy nor pioneers like Juliette Alvin, Muriel Warwick and other stalwarts as in Britain and other Western countries. We have virtually to start from scratch in this vital field of Music Therapy in all its hi-tech aspects in the interests of the mentally suffering and the physically ill.

However, the situation is not wholly bleak. For instance, Dr. S. Srinivasan, a Bombay-based M.D. in Pharmacology with post-graduate training in USA besides being an accomplished vocalist well-versed in both the Hindustani and Karnatak systems of music, has confirmed beyond doubt in his "First

\* The author dedicates this article to his good friend Sangeetha Vidwan K. Rajagopalan of Bombay (popularly known as Karachi Rajagopal), an unassuming and self-effacing artiste-Scientist-intellectual whose death recently is an irrisparable loss to the music world of this city. His marathon R.T.P. of Raga Dharmavathi for nearly three hours at Anushaktinagar some years back was a landmark musical



*Person Singular Account*", published in the August 1991 issue of the *Indian Journal of Internal Medicine* as under :

Music Therapy is quite successful in various diseases like Rheumatology, pain management, elective surgery, neurology diseases, psychiatry, and gastro intestinal disorders.

In another thought-provoking lec-dem at the Indian Medical Association, Bombay, Dr. Srinivasan was frank enough to frame the problem as follows:

"On the one hand we have the exaggerated claims made by the musicians and medical persons connected with various systems of alternative medicine, purporting to cure an assortment of illnesses, both organic and functional, without appropriate data to back the claims. On the other hand, there are many professors of medicine and psychiatry who tend to dismiss casually any likelihood of a therapeutic benefit accruing from music. The truth in fact lies somewhere in between. It can only be approached with a judicious blend of science and art employed in a carefully selected group of patients.

It is worthwhile examining in detail the current state of affairs in respect of this useful alternative therapy of healing music.

Another luminary, Dr. B. Ramamurthy, the world famous neuro-surgeon of Chennai, an enthusiastic votary of music therapy, writes :

It is clear that our sub-conscious mind can be subjected to the gentle influence of music, thus leading to a tranquil and coordinated function of the brain and the nervous system. Experimentally it has been shown that gentle music played to a resting subject increases the Alpha content of the Electroencephalogram (brain waves) which indicates increasing tranquillity of the brain. With such experimental proof, it will be easy for us to accept the benign role of gentle and pleasing music in tranquillising the nervous system and thus resulting in quicker recovery in persons who are ill, and better health and efficiency in normal persons."

This is, perhaps, why the mystic Sriram Bharati, a dedicated musician-cum-herbal

therapist of Chennai, modestly claims : "I try to make the sick well and the healthy happy."

Dr. B. N. Manjula, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore, says :

"Music therapy is like vitamin to the mind and body, not a drug or anti-biotic."

She cites the recent example of the wellknown mathematical genius, Vasisht, a newspaper celebrity some years back, who became a mental wreck and was undergoing treatment in NIMHANS. Vasisht who also grew into an incorrigible tobacco-addict besides, was brought back gradually to near-normalcy by pumping in regular doses of healing music daily over a sizeable period of time.

Dr. C. E. Guzetter of U. S. A. speaks of the sobering effect of relaxation induced by music therapy on patients in a coronary care unit with presumptive acute myocardial infarction.

Dr. S. Evers of Germany recommends music therapy for rheumatism.

Dr. H. Fried is for integrating music in breathing training and relaxation - in other words, a refined form of musical Pranayama.

Dr. G. J. Kerkvliet writes in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* of U. S. A. that music therapy may help control cancer pain.

Vidwan Kunnakkudi Vaidyanathan, now the head of the Raga Centre in Chennai, which is involved in conducting research on healing music, is vehement in underlining his finding that Raga Anandabhairavi is very effective for treating hypertension and Raga Sankarabharanam most useful in the treatment of mental patients. The Centre is at present engaged on research of the therapeutic possibilities of Ragas Bhairavi, Mohanam, Nasikabhooshani, etc.

But the erstwhile child prodigy and now a notable Chitraveena exponent Ravi Kiran does not appear to be wholly without reservations when he says :

"Perhaps miracles and cures did really happen. But it is a hit-and-miss method as of now."

Dr. E. S. Krishnamurthy, Neurologist and Psychiatrist of Brhaddhwani of Chennai, after a number of experiments, has evolved his own style of music therapy which enables the patient to heal himself without help from others.

On the other hand, the Director of Brhaddhwani, Dr. K. S. Subramanian, asserts that

"A scientific approach to music therapy must be developed before we can draw any conclusions about its power or value".

To cap it all, a musical heavy-weight like Sri Balamurali Krishna is quite confident that his intensive and extensive research on Music Therapy is on the threshold of evolving a revolutionary panacea for many an ill that we are heir to.

In this welter of opinions, views, suggestions and recommendations and a plethora of contradictions on Music Therapy, and especially in the wake of Michael Jacksonian explosion of emotional tremours witnessed recently in Mumbai's north-western suburb of Andheri, His Holiness Sri Ganapathi Sachchidananda Swamiji of the Avadhoota Datta Peetam of Mysore, gently descended almost simultaneously on Mumbai's north-eastern suburb of Anushaktinagar with his rasikas flocked to his memorable recital on the 3rd November 1996 in the specially erected open-air Shamiana.

For the Swamiji's mega music show on his electronic synthesiser, he was accompanied by a cream of musical talents viz., N. Ramani on Flute, L. Subramaniam of U.S.A. on Violin, (who specially air-dashed to Mumbai for this purpose), Thiruvaroor Bhaktavatsalam on

Mridangam, Vaikom Gopalakrishnan on Ghatam besides the Swamiji's own supporting artists on Clarinet, Harmonium, Tabla, Morsing, etc. It was a grand performance by any standard. During the Thani-Avarthanam interregnum, the Swamiji went round the entire audience with a magic wand in his right-hand; It was evident that the audience consisted of a substantial number of cancer, heart and other patients seeking Swamiji's curative blessings.

On the whole, it was a remarkable aesthetic experience for the music lovers in general and a salutary drugless melodic therapy for the ailing in particular who were fortunate enough to attend this unforgettable programme.

To sum up, there has emerged a broad consensus among the experts that music has in fact registered therapeutic effect on a host of ailments like psychosomatic disorders, anxiety neuroses, depression, behavioural disorders like aggression, sexual deviations, phobias, drug addiction, hypertension, postmyocardial infarction, pain syndromes, acid peptic diseases, irritable bowel syndromes, motility disorders, handicapped, retarded, autistic children, spastics, insomniacs, the blind, the elderly, the senile, etc.

There is yet a ray of hope for the suffering and the sick as our brave Prime Minister Shri H. D. Deve Gowda has promised HEALTH FOR ALL within a foreseeable future. The Government of India is, of course, hammering out a time-bound programme for achieving this most laudable objective. In this daunting campaign there cannot be a cheaper, more effective and all-embracing drugless alternative therapy than divine healing music.

We are facing a variety of perplexing problems to be sorted out before we can reach our cherished goal. It is high time the Union Government drew up a set of clear-cut and comprehensive terms of reference and constituted forthwith a high-level Committee of Experts on this subject - scientifically oriented



musicians as well as musically inclined medical practitioners - so that this new avenue of therapy can be explored in all its practical aspects (both preventive and curative) and spell out specific ways and means for exploiting this remedy in full for the relief of our ailing fellow-beings who can ill-afford the astronomical cost of medicare prevailing today.

### Music Therapy Offers A Drugless Cure

In this amazing task the co-operation of the patient is a must. Waves and waves of pure melody of a genius like T. N. Rajarathnam, a

Bismillah Khan or even the legendry Veena Dhanammal will be of little avail unless the patient tunes himself up to absorb them into his system to its acme when the soul is bound to dissolve in the ocean of divine healing music; the body when with all its diseases will metaphorically wither - no doctor, no drug and no medical bill to boot. That is the power of Music Therapy.

It will be at our peril if we continue to neglect this simple God-given remedy so easily available at virtually no cost.

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## VEDANTA THROUGH MELODY : BHARATI'S TREATMENT

By Dr. P. S. Parvatha Nathan

Bharat has given birth to a galaxy of great poets who have brought name and fame to this great nation through their immortal poetry. Mahakavi Subramanya Bharatiyar is indeed one of them. Bharati extols Kamban, Thiruvalluvar and Illango and asserts that there is none in the firmament of poetry as great as this trio:

*Yamarinda Pulavarile Kambanaippol  
Valluvarpol Ilangovaippol  
Bhoomitanil Yaanganume Pirandadillai*

Any ardent student of Bharati will feel the strong urge to add Bharati's name itself to his list of this illustrious trinity of poets.

All the great poets of this land of Sanatana Dharma, starting from Valmiki-the Aadi Kavi-whose illustrious poetic path was adapted by Kamban and Kalidasa, have one crucial thing in common. Apart from the exquisite lyrical beauty and simplicity of their poetry, that which lends grandeur and weight to their lyrics, is the Vedantic thoughts couched therein.

Bharati brings forth lofty Vedantic ideas based on Sanatana Dharma, in caste and yet at the same time, in simple Tamil language. Thus, Bharati's Vedantic poetry is as much for the lay man as for erudite scholars. The most important characteristic of his philosophy is its universal appeal, cutting across caste, creed, sect, sex and religion. The magnificent charm of Bharati's philosophy is born out of its (that is, his Vedanta's) all-inclusiveness in both spatial and temporal frames.

Further uniqueness of his Vedantic poetry is that it has been sung by Bharati himself. Multitudes of musicians, attracted by its lyrical, Vedantic and melodic beauty, make it a point to include Bharati's compositions in their concert repertoire.

In his composition, *Aaththichoodi Ilam Pirai* Bharati gives poetic embellish-

ment to the Upanishadic statement: *Ekam Sath Vipraha Bahudhaa Vadanti* - and the teaching of Thirumoola Nayanar "*Onre Kulam Oruvane Devan*".

He stresses unambiguously : The Great Thing (*Param Porul*) or Almighty is one and the same, though called variously by the practitioners of various religions. Its characteristic is nothing else but glowing knowledge (*Oliyurum Arivu*), or Gnana. Overcoming the shroud of Maya, if one perceives its true nature, then one gets rid of all problems. (*Allalai Agatrinaar*.) Let us pray for its grace (*Adan Arul Vaazhthi*) and achieve immortality. (*Amara Vaazhvu Eyduvom*.)

In yet another equally great composition, Bharathi discusses the meaning of that glowing knowledge or Gnana :

The sole and whole meaning of all the religions of this world is :

"You are God, Your are God, God is you, Yourself,  
You are That, you are That, That is You yourself.

Bharati goes on to stress :  
*Bhoomiyile Nee Kadavul Illai enru  
Pugalvadu Nin Manaththulle Pugunda  
Mayai*

*Sami Nee Ammayai thannai Neekki  
Sadaakaalam "Sivoham" enru  
Saadippaaye.*

"Searching for God elsewhere and uttering at the same time that You Yourself are not God, is due to the Maya that is entrenched in you. Since, in truth, You are God, banish that Maya and proclaim for ever "Sivoham (I am Siva)".

The grand old lady of Tamil poetry affectionately called *Avvai grandma* has said in her old *Atthichuvadi* : It is extremely wholesome to one and all to worship God. (*Aalayam Thozhudal Saalavum Nanru*).



Bharati, in his own inimitable style, interpreted Avvai's aphorism. The result is the new Athichuvadi with its invocatory song, 'Aathichoodi Ilampirai Anindu'. Bharati's Upanishadic melody ex-tolling unity in diversity, is as relevant today as in his own time.

## Paramporul Vaazhthu

Aathichoodi Ilampirai Anindu  
Monaththirukku muzhuven meniyaan  
Karunirang Kondu Paarkadal Misaikkidappon  
Mugammadu Nabikku Maraiyarul Purindon  
Esuvin Thandal Enappala Madaththinar  
Uruvagaththaale Unarndunaraadu  
palavagaiyagap paravidum Paramporul  
Onre : Adaniyal Oliyurumarivaam;  
Adanilaikkandaar Allalai Agatrinaar;  
Adanarul Vaazhththi Amaravaazhveyduvom

Raga : Kalyani (Music by Smt. Meera Nathan) Tala ; Misra Chapu  
Faculty Member of Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya

1) S ; S s n D p m P II M G N D M G R II  
Ath thi choo di i -lam pi rai ya nin du  
G M P P dn dp P II m P d P D N S ; II  
M o nath thi ru kkum muzhuvenmeniyam

2) s n g r s n r s n d p m g m II  
dn Rgr s n d p n d p m g r II  
Ath.....th Choo.....di i lampirai ya nin du.....  
mo nath thi rukkum II muzhuvonn me ni yan

### Anupallavi

n S n D P P (s) P ; II p M p D n s n d P , M II  
Ka runi ram kondu Par ka dal mi sai ki da pon  
M P d D D Nsn dpP ; II m P d P p d N S ; II  
Mu ga madhu nabi kku maraiya rul Purindon  
s n d n R N R ; n r II , g M g R , G R , S S ;  
Ye su vin than dhai ye na Pa la ma dha thi nar  
n G r S s n n P D , II n r n d P M P D N II  
U ru va gath thaa le unar ndhuna raa dhu II

### Charanam

p P g M P ; P ; II p D p M g d p m g r S II  
pa la va gai ya ga Pa ravidum Pa ram Porul  
n s r s R ; ; ; II p P p p G M ; P ; II  
- on dre .....Pa ram Po rul on dre  
m P d D p d N S S II s d N S ; ; ; II  
a da ni yal O li yu rum a ri vam  
n R s S s n n d d p P M II  
Pa ram Po rul On dre (adaniyal) repeat  
n D n R n r n r ; n r II , g M g R , g R , S S II  
Ada ni lai kan dar al lalai agath tri nar  
n G r S s n M D ; II n r n d P P M P d N II  
A da narul Vaazhthi Amara vazhu yei dhuvom

(Athi Choodi)

## "Bhavayami Raghuramam"

By S. Sankaranarayanan

The Vedas, together with the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and the Puranas form the foundation of our culture. For the people of India, Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Bharata and Hanuman are not mere characters of a great epic - Rama is Dharma incarnate; the others are also ex-empirens of Dharma.

The reading of the Ramayana, or listening to it in a discourse, purifies our mind by purging it of hatred, greed, jealousy, pride and covetousness.

Every performing art - dance, drama, music, Harikatha or puppetry - has drawn on the Ramayana for its themes. Great composers of Karnatak music have composed songs either delineating Ramayana episodes, or extolling the virtues of the characters.

Rama was the Ishta Devata (personal god) of two great composers, namely, Bhadrachala Ramadas and Tyagaraja and both have composed songs on Rama and the Ramayana. However, three composers have made Samkshipta Ramayana (Ramayana in a condensed form) the sole subject of a Kirti. They are ; Arunachala Kavirayar (1711-1778), Papanasam Sivan (1890 - 1973) and Swati Tirunal (1813-1846).

Arunachala Kavirayar was the author of 'Rama Natakam', a Tamil opera (dance-drama) containing 258 songs and 278 verses. In an invocatory song of the opera, he gives the story of Rama from birth to coronation. This song begins with the following words in the Pallavi: "Enakkū un iru padam ninaikka varam arulvaai" (Bless me that I may meditate on Thy two feet). This is followed by nine Charanas (stanzas) which tell the story of Rama. He is said to have composed it in the Raga Saurashtram, but it is now rendered as a Ragamalika (garland of Ragas).

Papanasam Sivan was a great composer of the present century. His compositions, more than 2,000 in about 75 Ragas, most of which are in Tamil are rich in devotion and Raga Bhava. He gives a condensed version of Ramayana in a Tamil composition, titled 'Rama Charita Gitam', in a Ragamalika of 24 Ragas. (The figure 24 has significance as Ramayana comprises 24,000 verses). The Pallavi reads : Kosalai putalvanai panivaai maname' (Oh! mind, bow to Rama, son of Kausalya).

'Bhavayami Raghuramam' is a Kirti of Maharaja Swati Tirunal, the royal composer of the erstwhile

princely State of Travancore, and a junior contemporary of the Karnatak Music Trimurti (Syama Sastri, Tyagaraja and Muttuswami Dikshitar). It is in Sanskrit, as most of his compositions are, and he composed it in the Raga 'Saveri'. It has a Pallavi, an Anupallavi and six Charanas. In this Kirti he gives the story of Ramayana in the six Charanas, devoting a Charana each to each of the cantos of the Ramayana from Balakanda to Yuddhakanda.

It was the musical genius of Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, the doyen of Karnatak musicians, which transformed that 'Saveri' composition into an exquisite Ragamalika and embellished it with sparkling Chitta-swaras', befitting a Ragamalika proper. It is this Ragamalika version that had made the Kirti popular as we hear it sung in Karnatak music concerts.

What made Semmangudi change it into a Ragamalika? He himself gives the reason :

Musicians used to sing only one or two Charanas of this Kirti. I felt that a Kirti so graphically portraying the story of Ramayana in full deserved a better treatment. With the consent of the royal household, I took the liberty of changing it into a Ragamalika and providing it with Chittaswaras. Thanks to the innate greatness of Ramayana, the Ragamalika has become popular both with the musicians and the Rasikas. I am gratified at the success of my effort".

Partly because it is in Sanskrit and partly because some "incorrect" syllabifications that are almost inevitable while singing necessitated by the requirements of melody and Tala, a lay listener may not easily comprehend the Sahitya of the Kirti. Moreover, the sweetness of music submerges the poetic beauty of the composition and the listener is often carried away by the charm of the melody.

Technically speaking, a Kirti is valued for its music - its portrayal of the "Raga Bhava" and its aesthetic content. On the other hand, in a Kirtana the Sahitya and the devotional content hold primacy. Generally, music in a simple form is, therefore, used as a medium in a Kirtana, so that a large number of people can sing it in chorus as in Bhajans. There is however no consensus among scholars on this dichotomy.

The delight of the listeners of 'Bhavayami' would be heightened if they can also appreciate the Sahitya of the compositions, whereby Swati Tirunal's command over both the classical language and the classical music will become evident to them. Here is the Kirti with transliteration and translation.\*

\*The writer is thankful to Dr. B. S. Ramakrishana Rao for help in translating the song).



**Pallavi - Saveri**

*Bhaavayaami Raghuraamam bhavya sugunaaraamam*

- I meditate on Rama of Raghu's lineage, handsome, pleasing and virtuous.-

**Anupallavi**

*Bhaavuka vitarana paraapaanga leelaa lasitram*

Who smilingly cast His glances at His ardent devotees from the corner of his eyes.

**Charanam 1, Baalkaandam. Natakuranji**

*Dinakaraanvaya tilakam divya gaadhisuta savanaa vana rachita  
Subaahumukha vadham Ahalyaa paavanam anaghameesa chaapa  
bhagam janakasutaa praanesam ghanakupita Bhriguraama garvaharam itasaaketam*

(I meditate on Lord Rama, who) the ornament of the Solar dynasty, protected the sacrifices conducted by the illustrious son of Gaadhi (Vishwamitra) after killing Subahu and the demons led by him, sanctified Ahalya, broke the bow of Siva, took Sita as life-partner, subdued the pride of the enraged Parasurama, and then went (returned) to Ayodhya.)

**Charanam 2 Ayodhya Kaandam Dhanyasi**

*Vihataabhishekam atha vipina gatam aaryavachaa sahita Seeta Saumitrim saantatamaseelam  
Guhanilayagam Chitrakootaagata Bharatadatta mahita ratnamaya paadukam madana sundaragam.*

(I meditate on Lord Rama, who), after the stalled coronation, went to the forest, in obedience to the commands of the father, along with Sita and Lakshmana, all the while calm and gentle, went to Guha's place and gave His worthy sandals to Bharata who came to Chitrakuta (to persuade Him to return to Ayodhya).

**Charanam 3 Aaranya Kaandam. Mohanam**

*Vitata Dandakaaranyaka gata Viraadha dalanam sucharita ghatajadatta anupamita vaish-  
navaastram patagavara Jataayunutam panchavatee vihitaavaasam atighora Soorpanakha  
vachanaagata Kharaadi haram*

(I meditate on Lord Rama, who) went to vast Dandak forest killed Viradha, and received the peerless Vishnu astra from the hands of the virtuous sage Agastya (Ghjataja - born of pot), was saluted by Jatayu, the great bird, took residence at Panchavati, and killed Khara and other demons who came and fought at the instigation of Surpanaga, the terrible).

**Charanam 4 Kishikindha Kaandam - Mukhari**

*Kanakamriga roopadhara khala Mareecha haram iha su-janavimata dasasyahrita janakajaa  
anveshanam anagha Pampaateera sangata Anjaneya nabhomani tanuja sakhyakaram Vaalitanu  
dalanam eesam.*

(I meditate on Lord Rama, who killed) the wicked Maricha who took the form of a golden deer, went in search of Sita who had been carried away by Ravana, met Hanuman on the banks of the sacred Pampa lake and made friendship with Sugriva (nabhomani - tanuja - son of Sun) and killed Vali.

**Charanam 5, Sundara Kaandam - Purvi Kalyani**

*Vaanarottama sahita Vaayu soonu karaarpita Bhaanu Sata bhaaswara bhavya ratnaamguleeyam  
tena punaraaneeta anyoona choodaamani darsanam sreenidhim udadhi teeraasrita Vibheeshana  
militam.*

(I meditate on Lord Rama), who gave to Hanuman, in the presence of Sugriva, His magnificent jewelled ring, having the brilliance of a hundred suns, and thereafter had the beautiful sight of the priceless Chudamani (crest-jewel of Sita) brought by him (Hanuman) and who was met by Vibhishana seeking refuge on the shore of the ocean.

**Charanam 6, Yuddha Kaandam - Madyamavati**

*Kalitavara setubandham Khalanisseema pisitaasana dalanamuru dasakantha vidaaram atidheeram  
jvalana poota Janakasutaa sahita yaatasaaketam vilasita pattaabhishekam viswapaalam Padmanaab-  
ham.*

(I mediate on Lord Rama, who), constructed a remarkable causeway across the sea, killed demons) nissima pisitasana- unruly and flesh-eating), killed the great valorous Ravana, went to Ayodhya with Sita who had been sanctified by fire, and had resplendent coronation.

The composer looks upon Sree Padmanabha as Rama Himself, 'Padmanabha' is also the signature of the composer.

- Courtesy : "Bhavan's Journal"

**The 'Golden' Finale**

The curtain was rung down on the 15 - month long Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Sri Rajarajeswari Bharata Natya Kala Mandir with a grand 3- day finale (Dec'96) of Swarna Nrityotsav at the Nehru Centre when the First Lady of the State Smt. Ackama paid rich encomia to this institution par excellence.

As a pleasant coincidence it was His Excellency, the State Governor Dr. P.C. Alexander who inaugurated the celebrations in October, 1995. During the interim period the ethos of the Kala Mandir manifested itself in the more than 25 Swarna Natyanjalis presented at various centres of the metropolis, other cities of the country and abroad. Each one of them was a landmark performance that spoke of the depth, dimension, momentum and hallmark of excellence, the Kala Mandir has gained during the epoch, making golden years of service.

No exaggeration, It was a lifetime Sadhana, a Parampara Sadhana, flowing into the stream of the art uninterrupted for six generations.

During the last fifty years the Rajarajeshwari has not only worked for its establishment, entrenchment, progress and propagation of the Tanjavur Bani of the Parampara but also been witnessing the changes, the evolution and progress occurring alongside in other disciplines of the dance art in the metropolis. And it was only pertinent that in the year of its Golden Jubilee celebrations the Kala Mandir should bring in for projection in this panorama the other dance disciplines and sister institutions so that the connoisseurs and Rasikas could have a clear perception of the evolution which has taken place in the performing Arts.

Whilst the opening day of the finale took off with 'Bharatiya Nritya Darshan' presenting four dance disciplines viz, Bharata Natyam, Manipuri, Odissi and Kathak, the second day with two sessions, one "Nritya Niroopan" (Lecture Demon-

stration) and the other "Kavya Natya" (Performance) focused on intellectual plane, bringing out some more rare finds from ancient and modern literature. The concluding day had again a twin session of "Apoorva Abhinaya Sangeet", emphasizing on Padam-Javalis which gave enormous scope for Abhinaya and "Deva Nritya Manjari", a presentation which traced in a nutshell the evolution of dance from temple precincts to the royal durbar and on to the modern platform. The three day fete brought to fore Kala Mandir's vision of cultural integrity.

The Bharatiya Nritya Darshan highlighted the unity in diversity in the performing arts. Kala Sadan Guru Mani, one of the early students of Shri Rajarajeswari, presented his students in a "Dasavatharam" dance drama. *Parkkadal Alaimela*, the popular Ragamalika, was choreographed well and the dancers did their roles with a sense of understanding and ease.

The grace of Manipuri, the very recital of Bols now vibrant and now soft reflecting the inherent Tandava-Lasya element in the Krishna - Radha dance competition was performed by Darshana and Lathasana. Ranjana's Sathvik Abhinaya even in the daring 'Abhisarika' and excited 'Vasakasajjika' she portrayed only emphasized the in-depth vision of the dancer and the expressional resources at her command. "Bhashak", this number based on Nayika Bhedas was rendered by Ranjana with exquisite artistry and reticence: Even her Khandita was soul-stirring as she enacted the Uttama Khandita, Radha's anger with an inherent agony. The Jhaveri Sisters rose to great heights in that short "Darshan".

An alumini of Sri Rajarajeswari in Bharata natyam Anandi Ramachandran showed her prowess in Odissi. One was happy to see her keep the two art forms in tact and did not mingle. Her Pallavi, Ashtapadi etc., were neat and expressive and she had the versatile P. S. Krishnamoorthy who had his 'debut' in Odissi music to support her in vocal. His Harmonium play lent a good support to his



singing. And Guru Natwar Maharana's Bols and Pakhawaj were tuneful though at times loud.

Yet another alumini of the Kala Mandir Madhurita Sarang showed her sophistry in Kathak.

The session of Nritya Niroopan was enlightening and soulfilling as it brought to light the hidden treasures of our literature and poetry. Dr. Kanak Rele's lec-dem on new facets of repertoire was lucid and self-explanatory. As part of the venture to make Mohini Attam sustain its individuality on its own repertoire and not shine on borrowed feathers, she had culled out material from ancient Tamil lyrics, choreographed very touching number called "Kubja" from the daily events of human life, and also created lilting items for children. The demonstration by herself and students Sunanda and Prabha were impressive.

Acharya Parathi Kumar's forte is in choreographing the Nirupanas of the Maratha Kings of Tanjore who were not only patrons of art but also composers. The uniqueness of the Nirupanas lies in that the lyrics are in Marathi and music is set to Karnatic Ragas while the whole Margam from Pushpanjali - Alarippu (Alaru in Nirupanas) to Tillana and Sloka is in one Raga and one Tala, the music, lyrics (the Dhatu and Mathu) in notation along with Solkattus etc are composed. The choreographer is only to set it to dance and present. Acharya's student Sandhya Purecha presented a Varnam in Pantuvarali with a slight blend of Loka Dharmi which is characteristic of the Acharya.

The most gripping demonstration was veteran Kalamandalam Raman Kutty Nair's 'Hanuman'. Kathakali sans costume, sans make up rose to new high in the hands of this septuagenarian. It was the episode of Vayuputra's mission in search of Sita. The hurdles he faced en route, the way he overcame them before reaching Lanka and spotting Sita was a gesture drama unsurpassed in emotions and evocations. Needless to say it touched the hearts of the spectators.

"Kavya Natya" was a presentation based on the immortal epics giving expositions to great characters or themes of moral impact. Geetha, Radha Krishna visualised with telling effect "Vishwaroopa Darshanam" from *Narayaneeyam*.

Vani Ganapathy's *Panchali Sabatham* (Draupadi's Vow) reflected the fury of a woman scorned and Amala-Manisha's *Charana Paduka* enunciated a very touching theme from Ramayana depicting Bharata's dilemma and his solution - a noble sacrifice - which elevated his character, while Malini Krishnamurthy visualised "Hanuman Thoodu". Once again the repertoire comprised lyrics from multilingual texts, such as Sanskrit (*Narayaneeyam*), Tamil (Bharatiyar's, *Panchali Sabatham*) and Kamba Ramayan ("*Hanuman Thoodu*") and Hindi ("*Tulsidas Ramayan*"). The Hindi lyrics for *Charana Paduka* were tuned by Pt. Jasraj.

Dedicating the "Apoorva Abhinaya Sangeet" to the late Smt. T. Brinda., a rare repository of Padam and Javali, Sri Rajarajeshwari presented two of the doyen's senior disciples, Smt Kalyani Sharma and Smt. Alamelu Mani in a music session. The high quality of Brindamma's music and the essence of Abinaya Sangeet were reflected in the rendition. More significant was when a couple of these were visualised by great exponents of Kathak who had training in Bharata Natyam at the Kala Mandir during its formative years. Damayanti Joshi's *Valaputala Vasama* (Atana) and Roshan Kumari's *Inienna Pechchirukku* to Alamelu Mani's vocal rendition proved that the language of gestures, the realm of Abhinaya, knows no barriers.

The evening session of "Deva Nritya Manjari" was a historical flash, giving expressions to the tradition, on the trends and the inevitable innovation. The opening temple scene, the live Nagaswara strain, the Devadasi's solemn Nritya had an impact of its own. The shift to "Raja Durbar", the conflicts among the devadasis, the compromises they made on becoming Raja Dasis were subtly portrayed along with the Narasthuthi numbers composed in praise of the king, the Maratha ruler of Tanjore. These contained messages of great historical value as well. The emphasis was not only on the shift of venue but on the trend the art was to course through adding Narasthuthi along with Devasthuthi, and adopting multilingual repertoire. The Marathi compositions of Tulaja, Sant Tukaram gave indications to the winds of change which occurred when democratisation of arts took place making public

platforms a pivotal point. The advent of cosmopolitan clientele, the addition of repertoire, in Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, the presentation of group dances etc highlighted the modern ethos that one had to attune oneself to. Yet in all these presentations the choreography, a handiwork of dynamic Guru Kalyanasundaram, never swerved from its Bani norms. No compromise on gimmicks for gaining applause or popularity. The dignity was maintained. In fact it helped foster national integration and that the Kala Mandir achieved with decorum and dignity. In fact Guru Kalyanasundaram has been instinctively innovative, his motivations is to innovate in rhythmic and articulate characters of mythology and themes of historic values giving them a relevance in the milieu. His *Panchakanya*, bringing on to focus characters of everlasting impact, such as Ahalya, Sita, Draupadi, Tara and Mandodari had each a message for women of all ages. In the Ekaharya presentation he spun Pancha Gati Kavuthvams, each serving as a prelude to the Kavya of a Kanya. The theme and the rhythmic spin up, no doubt, was uniformly appreciated wherever presented by Vani Ganapathy.

*Vasanthavalli*, a remake of Tirukooda Rasappa Kavirayar's *Kutralak Kuravanji*, was another prized presentation staged at so many places with Meera Dhanu and Gowri Rao in the heroine - gypsy cast.

Among other significant presentations mention must be made of *Sarabendra Bhoopala Kuravanji* which stood out for its traditional format, recalling the Parampara choreography. The elder Guru Mahalingam Pillai's strict adherence to tradition, his fidelity to his father Kuppiyah Pillai's choreography came through in this dance drama revolving round King Serforji moulding however to the modern day time frame and talent available. Some of his senior students like Lalitha Krishnan and Pushpa Kanwate elegantly brought out what Rajappa and her dancemates did when Vidwan Kuppiyah Pillai staged it several decades ago at Tanjore. The writer had the opportunity a few years back to witness Rajalakshmi (alias Rajappa) don the role of the heroine Mohanavalli

at the age of 80 with the same energy and enthusiasm as a teenager dancer. Age had not withered her zest or sensitivity. While it was a nostalgic recreation for her, it was a refreshing experience for the audience of the Sruti Foundation's National Seminar on Parampara Dance Tradition. Even the Ragas used such as Ahiri, Goulipantu, Kambhoji, Pantuvarali reflected the classical taste of the royal composer. The Guru's *Krishna Parijatham* was another milestone in the upkeep of Parampara tradition in the modern milieu. His old students (who are running their own institutions Pushpa, Shymala and Padma's short dance enactment of *Mahishasura Mardhini* at the inauguration was another quintessence exposition giving vivid visualisation of the Guru's choreography and the training they have had under the Gurus of Rajarajeshwari.

Among the scions, Vasant Kumar, himself a merited Dance Guru stood out for his melodious Nattuvangam, following in the footsteps of "Mama" Mahalingam Pillai in training and choreography. Vishwanath with a thrust for something individual tried to bring about a blend of his father and uncle's styles, a thrill, a sparkle in the sober traditional format. The Swarna Natyanjali he conceived, choreographed and conducted with the students of the Ghatkopar branch of the Kala Mandir (who are under his wings) was refreshing in that the familiar numbers got a new facelift in choreography. His group presentations are making a headway.

The 'Golden Year' saw the rise of yet another scion K. Harikrishnan as a 'Star' Mridangist of the family orchestra.

Behind the successful male-Gurus are the resourceful women of the Parampara who are not only dancers themselves but also efficient organisers, teachers and affectionate 'guardians' to the umpteen participants. One would have liked to see Mythili Kalyanasundaram, Pushpa Krishna Mohan and Shanti Shekar (who lends her voice from the wings) appear on centre stage in the Golden Jubilee Fete.

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## A Song in Stone : Gujri Mahal

By Y. Bhargava

Songs are songs and stones are stones, but the two meet and become one in the charming and sophisticated Gujri Mahal hidden in the apron of the ancient Fort of Gwalior whose ramparts have witnessed several colourful events of history.

Gujri Mahal, the palace of the Gujri queen, is a charming structure built for a charming lady. The sandstone walls which have been designed with a rare sense of balance and beauty, carry several attractive panels decorated with coloured tiles and beautiful carvings. Within the walls is a spacious courtyard ventilating a series of chambers forming the periphery of the palace. The central portion is occupied by a double-storeyed cellar which, incidentally, also served as a hall for assemblies to be held. "Over and above the series of rooms on the flanks of the courtyard is built a pretty chamber, very much a lady's retreat, cosy and quiet and at the same time commanding a fine view of the structures within and without the palace. This beautiful group of buildings is overshadowed by the rock out of which grows the Gwalior Fort, austere and forbidding. By contrast, the Gujri Mahal looks like a flaming ruby set amidst a mosaic of gold and emerald.

### *A Symphony in Stone*

Gujri Mahal takes its name from Mrignayani, the fawn-eyed queen of Raja Man Singh of the Tomar dynasty, who ruled over the destinies of this historic and ancient fort from A.D. 1486. She was a Gujri by caste and hence the name. It now houses an archaeological Museum, perhaps one of the very best in the country, and offers to tourists and scholars a rich fare of artistic, sculptural and numismatic treasures, besides some rare specimens of Indian iconography.

The Taj Mahal has been described as a dream in marble. Gujri Mahal may well be called a symphony in stone, so perfect is its symmetry and so harmonious the grouping of the constituent units. On seeing the massive

ramparts rising and falling with the undulating nature of the terrain, one understands why Goethe said architecture is frozen music.

There is a pretty legend associated with the construction of this monument. Raja Man Singh ruled over Gwalior towards the end of the 14th century. Besides being a brave warrior who could boast of having shown the Kings of Delhi and the Sultans of Mandu their place, Man Singh was a great patron of art, literature and music. He and his barons were out hunting around Gwalior. Near a village called Rai, they found their path in the thick forest obstructed by a pair of fighting bison. While the Raja and his party waited for the combatants to finish, a Gujri maiden who was passing the same way with pitchers on her head was not so patient. Nonchalantly she stepped forward, and literally taking the bulls by their horns, she separated them and went her way. It is difficult to say what impressed Raja Man Singh more - her matchless beauty or her fearless and gallant deed. It was a case of love at first sight. A request from the Raja for the maiden's hand was laid before her great surprised father. But before the old Thakur could give his ready and glad assent, the spirited maiden who was Mrignayani wanted to lay down some conditions. She would be happy to marry Raja Man Singh and be the mother of his children but a separate palace would have to be built for her to a design of her choice. Water from her village would have to be conveyed by a specially constructed pipeline to her palace as she could not do without the elixir from her village well. She, a proficient singer, would sing as and when it pleased her.

No conditions were too stiff for the love-sick Man Singh. The new queen inaugurated a cultural renaissance in Gwalior. Daring architectural experiments were undertaken. New motifs and techniques in art were tried as never before. New Ragas and harmonies in music were tried. Gujari, Bahul Gujri, Mal Gujri and Mangal Gujri were all named for the queen. Accomplished musicians like Naik Mahmood



and Naik Karan assembled within the four walls of Gujri Mahal and discussed the academic side of the celestial art of music. Even a treatise on music known as *Man Kauthal* was compiled.

In this great work of regeneration of music, the presiding lady of Gujri Mahal had a great part to play. "She poured out the liquid music of her voice to quench the thirst of his spirit."

The stone walls of the palace of Gujri warded off the attacks of the enemy in times of war, and witnessed the efforts to usher in a golden age of creative expression in Gwalior. It was perhaps Mrignayani who inspired Raja Man Singh to build Man Mandir higher up on the Fort rock, a structure of surpassing grandeur and beauty. The Man Mandir has been so boldly conceived and blends with the surrounding scene with such consummate skill that one cannot help feeling that Mrignayani was behind the undertaking. The pierced-stone panels are of surpassing beauty - the ducks, the banana trees, and the Elephants brought in bold relief by means of a technique now lost.

The massive elephant Gate, culminating in the watch-towers on the flanks and dainty bowers in between, represents fully the age of chivalry and romance. This group of buildings attributed to Man Singh and Mrignayani were, at a later age, the scene of a romantic tragedy when Prince Murad imprisoned there by his brother, the Emperor Aurangzeb, lost his bid for freedom owing to his fatal attachment to a slave girl.

Tradition has it that even now, on the night of the full moon, on the weird ramparts of the Fort one may scan the outlines of a fleeing figure clad in colourful skirts and veil, chanting as she goes the notes of the Gujri Ragas. If we happen to meet her, well might we request her, in the words of Shelley to

*Sing again with your dear voice revealing a tone of some world far from ours*

*Where music and moonlight and feeling are one.*

Courtesy : "Air Miscellany"  
(Broadcast from Indore)

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## North - South Integration

### Music Pilgrims' Progress

By K. A. Chidambaram

The Tyagaraja Centenary Memorial Fund recital of Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi and party, was an epoch-making event in recent musical history of India\*.

For the first time, Hindustani music votaries mustered, strong to pay tribute to Swami Tyagaraja, one of the greatest saint-composers who built up the greatness of Karnatak music. A cosmopolitan Bombay Committee sponsoring Smt. Subbulakshmi's recital in memory of Tyagaraja, and Premier Kher of Bombay inaugurating the function, form a landmark in musical developments, as they form the climax of certain unifying forces and synthetic tendencies that have been working among the intelligent coteries both in Northern and Southern India for good neighbourliness between the two great schools of Indian music.

### Common Ancestry

The origin of Indian music is traced to Sama Veda, though well-known music experts only accept this connection more from the periodic point of view than from the standpoint of technique. With Sama Veda as the mythological origin for both the systems, one finds this common ancestry strengthened in the historical times of musical treatises and Granthas.

That the Kirtanachars and authorities on Hindustani music like Ahobala, Pundrika Vithala and Pandit Somanath hailed from South India, and that they were also experts in Karnatak music show the inter-connection between the two systems. Though this link was often snapped due to distance and absence of communication between Karnatak and Hindustani music centres, it was revived off and on by musical entrepreneurs.

### Maharaja Swati Thirunal

The middle of the 18th century was the heyday of Karnatak music, with Tyagaraja, Dikshitar and Syama Sastri

looming large in the picture. Even then Maharaja Swati Thirunal of Travancore revived the Northern contact in a grand way. A linguist of a high order and a reputed composer in Karnatak music, Swati Thirunal took great pains to learn Hindustani and Hindustani music, and had left scores of Hindustani compositions as a common legacy to the two systems. Sulaiman Saheb and Smt. Halavati two great Hindustani vocalists of the time, adorned his Durbar as court singers and evidently helped him in many Hindustani compositions.

Kokilkanta Meruswami, who was also an authority on Hindustani music, assisted Swati Thirunal in the production and stylisation of many Harikathas in Northern Harikirtan style. In his court also flourished Tanjore Rama Iyengar, an expert in Hindustani music, and Chintamani, a good Sarangi player. During the same period Dikshitar, the great Karnatak composer, visited Benares and other places in the North and probably had contacts with Hindustani music system. The Hindustani compositions of Swati Thirunal have been practically neglected by Hindustani musicians and it is time they took up a special study of his compositions which would throw immense light on the progress of Hindustani music technique.

### Abdul Karim Khan's Exploits

After the passing away of Swati Thirunal there was practically an eclipse of the link between the two systems till the late Khan Saheb Abdul Karim Khan, revived it in the early 'twenties of this century. A born artiste and a gifted stylist, the late Khan Saheb made a mark even at his first recital in Madras and swept off Karnatak audiences with his soul-stirring voice and Hindustani high technique. Madrasis drank deep in the flowing melody of "Jamona Ke Tir", where the Khan Saheb's skylarking and top "Tans" always proved a big hit.

The wavy, elusive, sinuous and zig-zagging course of Zinzoti in "Piya Bina

\* An article written as early as 1946, found in the collection of Newspaper clippings of Ms. Damayanti Joshi a renowned Kathak exponent.



*Nahi Aoota Chalen*" projected in the mind's eye of the audience the lava of emotions of the lover awaiting the partner to break the monotony of the dreary existence. As days passed on, Khan Saheb's visit to the South became an annual fixture and despite the ignorance of language, southern audiences hung to his voice. During his visits the Khan Saheb established contact with great Karnatak musicians like Poochi Iyengar, Gayakasikamani Muthiah Bhagavathar, Bidaram Krishnappa and a host of others.

Smt. Dhanam, the great Veena player, was then the ruling Queen of Karnatak music, and it was in her house that Khan Saheb established most of his contact with Karnatak musicians. In the house of Balasaraswathi, the well-known Indian danseuse, there hangs a beautiful photograph of Khan Saheb in days of early triumphs which has been bequeathed to her by her grand mother, Veena Dhanam, and which she keeps as a priceless possession.

### *He Sings to Conquer*

Idyllic stories are told of the Khan Saheb's early exploits in Madras music circles. His association with Smt. Dhanam and a host of other Karnatak celebrities often resulted in championship contests, 'tour de force' and music Marathons of a high order in which the Khan Saheb measured the strength of the Hindustani music technique with Karnatak veterans. Once it happened that Smt. Dhanam was singing to some of her admirers, in the midst of which the Khan Saheb put in his appearance. She was rendering on the Veena, Karnatak 'Atana' in such a masterly way that the Khan Saheb sat still, thoroughly engrossed in it.

After the Alap, when she rendered a famous "Padam" by a well-known Karnatak composer in the same Raga, the beauty of stylisation and marvellous technique captivated the Khan Saheb, and he came out with unstinted praise for her marvellous performance. He openly saluted her as "Veena Saraswathi".

Common friends who were present often twitted the Khan Saheb jokingly whether he could produce anything from his Hindustani repertoire to match Smt. Dhanam's achievement. The Khan Saheb used to smile in his inimitable way without answering their question. Days after this event, the Khan Saheb chanced to give a recital in a friend's house, when he rendered Miyaki-Malhar. It was a challenging performance when the Khan Saheb in full form kept the audience gaping with his rare reaches, majestic sweeps, graceful turns and charming curvatures. He did not indulge in any fire-works, nor did he split the atom merely for the display of soulless virtuosity. He lifted the song from the realm of mechanics to the super-plane of melody, drawing the fans in its surging tide.

It was overall triumph for the Khan Saheb, and Veena - Dhanam, who was in the audience, handsomely acknowledged the Khan Saheb's mastery and, as a mark of tribute, emptied her purse on him. Madras became the adopted home of the Khan Saheb, and his unexpected death in one of the South Indian towns had made him a hero to his innumerable South Indian fans who are even to-day full of Abdull Karim Khan's stories.

### *Kapileshwari Buva's Mission*

After Abdull Karim Khan, the late Manji Khan, son of the late Ustad Alladia Khan, visited Madras. He was followed by Vinayakrao Patwardhan, Narayanrao Vyas, Roshanara Begum, Kesarbai and Hirabai Barodekar, and all of them were hailed as musical ambassadors. The latest Hindustani artiste to visit South India is Kapileshwari Buva, one of the able exponents of Abdull Karim Khan's school. Unlike other artistes, he converted his visit into a sort of music mission to know and to be known by Karnatak exponents.

He attended the Madras Music Conference early this year\* and addressed the Expert Committee of the Madras Music Academy under the presidentship of Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer. He gave a demonstration of a few Hindustani

Ragas to bring out the fundamental unity and the basic affinity between the Hindustani and Karnatak systems of music. His exposition was of a rare type and impressed a galaxy of Karnatak musicians. During his stay in Madras Kapileshwari gave a number of public and private concerts and established contact with foremost exponents including "Tiger" Varadachari, Smt. Subbulakshmi and Rukmini Devi of Kalakshetra.

### *Musical Affinity*

In the special concert arranged for him at Adyar by "Tiger" Varadachari and Rukmini Devi, Kapileshwari Buva gave a demonstration of the Hindustani high technique and its parallelism with Karnatak technique. According to him (1) Kafi (Hindustani) and Karaharapriya (Karnatak) (2) Jogia (Hindustani) and Saveri (Karnatak) (3) Kaliyan (Hindustani) and Yamuna Kalyani (Karnatak) (4) Bageshri (Hindustani) and Sri Ranjani (Karnatak), (5) Puriya Danasari (Hindustani) and Pantuvarali (Karnatak) (6) Piloo (Hindustani) and Girvani (Karnatak) (7) Rageshri (Hindustani) and Natta Kuranji (Karnatak) (8) Mangal Bhairava (Hindustani) and Chakrvaham (Karnatak) and (9) Mishra Kafi (Hindustani) and Ananda Bhairavi (Karnatak) can be bracketed for their affinity and allied study.

The recital was whirlwind success and the sponsors, "Tiger" Varadachari and Rukmini Devi, congratulating Kapileshwari wrote in the press "Last night, Ustad Balkrishna Buva gave his first concert in Madras at Kalakshetra, Adyar. The beauty of his singing was reminiscent of his great Guru Abdull Karim Khan, and he proved a worthy disciple of a rare genius. Balkrishna Buva sang into the hearts of the audience by the purity of his classic Hindustani style and by the devotion and love of beauty he expressed through his music. We hope that Madras will take advantage of his presence and recognise him, thus paying homage to his Guru who was so loved by South India".

Apart from his exploits in music circles, Kapileshwari Buva did a piece of good work for Bharata Natya also. Rukmini Devi learned from him the well-known "Pad" of the late Khan Saheb "Oogicha Ka Kanta" in Mishra Kafi and "Hasa Hasa, Garv Lagaoon" in Shuddha

Bhairavi for dance recital. Bharata Natya, taking to Hindi and Marathi "Pads" for interpretational themes, is bound to prove revolutionary in its effect, as the dance will have an all-India appeal and remove the language barriers which handicap it at present.

The labours of pioneers like Kapileshwari Buva should result in greater contacts between Hindustani and Karnatak musicians. Votaries of respective schools should acquire a basic knowledge of the other system, without which there cannot be a fullscale progress. The present policy of unconscious pilferage or planned plagiarism on both sides will only lead to devaluation of the music styles.

### *Federation of Music*

The constitution of Indian music is a beautiful and natural evolution from which Cabinet Missionaries like Cripps and Pethick Lawrence can take useful hints, without attempting to erect a "Trisangu Swarga" of Indian freedom. The music system of India is a grand federation of high melody, the Vadi (Principal), Samvadi (allied), Anuvadi (neutral) and Vivadi (belligerent) Swaras going to make constituent units. There is no conflict between the centre and the provinces. On the other hand, both of them conspire to produce tuneful flow of melody.

There is no demand for Pakistan despite solid contributions of stylists like Amir Khusru, Sultan Husain, Emperor Shah Mahomed Shah and Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. Swami Haridas, Soordas and Mira Bai who used music as an instrument for liberation had no "Akhand Hindustan" imperial dreams. Swami Purandaradas and Tyagaraja had no Dravidastan ambitions, in spite of their being the makers of Karnatak music. In the march of ages, Indian music marks the triumph of fusion and absorption of a varied cultures. It is a glorious panorama of federation of races and cultures, without compulsory groupings or provisions for "opting out".



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### Cultural Scene in Mumbai

## A Veritable Feast

It was back to Pandal Cutcheris in November, 1996, and the 3-day Winter Festival of Music organised by Shanmukhananda, commemorating the Birth Centenary of Sangeeta Samrat Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, turned out to be a grand affair. The artistes, Hyderabad Brothers, Neyveli Santhanagopalan and Kadri Gopalnath (Saxophone), made their mark with reverence to Sangeetha and the Samrat.

The two vocal recitals by Hyderabad Brothers (Seshachari and Ragavachari) and Santhanagopalan were certainly a class by themselves, heightened in quality by excellent support Violinist Sriram Parasuran and percussionists K. V. Prasad (Mridangam) and N. Govindarajan (Ghatam) gave.

Seshachari and Raghavachari have risen to the top within a short period specialising in duo-singing.

Vocal dueting had depleted after the demise of Alathur Brothers and the vacuum has to an extent been filled by the Hyderabad Brothers. Their excellent sense of Sangeetha and Sahitya, their aesthetic felicity to mould the structure and Sangathees without mauling the Sahitya and giving the uchcharan its rightful place, their lucidity of Swara enunciation in a dialogue and above all their voice synchrony made the concert an aesthete's fare. There was some murmur among the audience that Seshachari was domineering over Raghavachari and took over a major chunk of Alapana segment. It was however obvious that Raghavachari had some voice trouble and he conserved his energy for Kriti renditions and Swara dialogue. He revealed his Manodharma in the mid-octave delineation of Mohanam. In which he showed his mettle as no inferior to his brother though with a voice that had more softness and subtlety by than the volume of his sibling.

Whatever that be the overall presentation was impressive and weighty. Seshachari's start and finish of Mohanam were exquisite, and had the Gathra touch. However it was Sriram who excelled in bringing out a distilled pure Mohanam. (It may not be out of place to mention here that Mohanam in its modern-day 'Avatar' has acquired some suave nuances of Mohana Kalyani and musicians young and old do not bother the 'onslaught', if one may use the word, as the aesthetic beauty in their opinion, is only enhanced by such 'blend'. But Mohanam, the pentatonic charmer, needs no such subtle blends. It can enchant on its own native aesthetics. Very few adhere strictly to the tenets of tradition).

The other highlights of Seshachari's Alapana were Sriranjani and Janaranjani. Both these Ragas had fine expositions, reflecting the flourish in an aesthete's imagination. Janaranjani is not usually taken up for Alapana. Seshachari not only delineated it quite succinctly but put heart and soul and into *Smarane Sukham Rama Nama*, the moving Kriti of Tyagaraja.

The Brothers' *Bhuvinidasudane* was not only a Kriti not much sung these days but an object lesson to students of music in properly moulding the Sahitya to the Sangathi structure. *Aviveka Manavulu Kori Kori*, they sang as it should be, not the melody-dominant *Avivekama navulu Kori Kori* which musicians usually sing. There is no excuse for Padacheda. One should sing at least with a proper Sahitya sense if not a Sahitya-feel.

Niraval was conspicuous for its absence in the duo's concert. Any attempt at it was confined to a couple of stances. With their vision in music, their felicity with Sahitya and Sangeetha, they could have made a conceptual contribution in this segment. But they chose to hasten to the Swaraprastharas, where they entered into a dialogue that was marked for



lucidity, lyricism and an elusive intricacy and lilt. To which Sriram added his own fabulous imagination.

*Mohana Rama* after the three-tier-Alapana referred to in the beginning, was another magnificent rendition with fine-textured Sangathis and felicitous Swara dialogue. The percussion Thani was woven in the same intricate facet by Prasad and Govindarajan keeping everybody eagerly engaged. The Tuk-kadas also exuded classical essence.

A chela of Madurai T. N. Seshagopalan though, Neyveli Santhanagopalan, of late is emulating the late Madurai Mani Iyer almost to the extent of imitating him, and straining his vocal chords. He concentrated on Niraval-Swaras besides Alapana; and Kriti rendition too received an evocative treatment. But too much of an open throated singing defying the strain only strained the musical effect. Overlooking the soar-points one enjoyed his music for what it was worth.

Especially his feel for the Sahitya, evocation of the mood was impressive. The Niraval-Swara-sessions in *Deva Deva* (Mayamalavagowla), *Nada Tanumanisum* (Chittaranjani) were melodious. Though the expansive Alapana of Pantuvarali was developed on Akaara the plea in *Raghuvara Nannu Marava Taguna* was touching. And the Niraval at *Manasuna Neeke Marulu Konanu* was truly an Anjali to Chembai (this Raga and Kriti were both one of the favourites of the Samrat), and tellingly rendered bringing out the essence of the theme.

Soar-throat upset Santhanagopalan's Sankarabharana in upper reaches, the Alapana, toeing pure traditional format tended to be a demonstration to the students of music of the Raga's unique phraseology (Pidis). Sriram made a magnificent edifice of the Raga. The Ati Viyulamba rendition of *Swara Raga Sudharasauda Bhakti* was perhaps the epitome of his spontaneous skill in Niraval. The Pallavi stance elaborated in Niraval gave the artiste an enormous scope to weave through

the Sahitya, using Yati aesthetics to bring out a varied meaningful phraseology, e.g., *Bhakti, Rasa Bhakti, Sudharasa Bhakti, Raga Sudharasa Bhakti, Bhakti Rasayuda ... Swara Raga sudha*" etc. The spontaneity showed the artiste's involvement.

If Sriram utilised the facet to come out with his versatility too, Prasad and Govindarajan showed their prowess in the Thani each with his originality and individuality 'stroking' his own way in smooth spontaneity in Tisra, Khanda stances without hampering the other, yet synchronising with felicity. It was a fine example of music in its imaginative high.

Santhanagopalan's post - Sankarabharana fare was equally weighty. But what intrigued one was his casual rendering of a Pancharathna in the middle of the concert with slips and slurs. Its non-inclusion may not have affected the equilibrium of the repertoire, but its mechanical rendition did.

The third of the Winter-festival was an entertainment by Kadri Gopalnath. He has no doubt harnessed the loud Saxophone to Karnatak Gamakas and nuances. Nevertheless his resort to frills and gimmicks brings excitement and not evocation. Added to his own entertaining mood was Kanyakumari's Violin, newly acquired one with amplifier attached, which matched the tone and volume of the Saxophone, Result? Musical jamboree.

Amidst the fireworks, there was some sensitive music, flashes of Gamaka - laden Sangathees that helped sustain the concert. The stance *Taraka Nama* in *Ksheerasagara* (Devagandhari) had the subdued tonal elegance while the Kriti in general was plain-coated.

Gopalnath's Hamsanandii exuded poignance. His modulation, soft toning of the instrument, testified to his reverence to Samrat Chembai and he dedicated the Kriti, *Pavanaguru* to the Guru. The reverential mood was carried through in the Swaras too with pauses and punctuations. The sweet - toned

Kanyakumari emerged in the Alapana, making it evocative in the bass.

The duo were once again involved in an evocative delineation of Kapi, taken up for the major Ragam - Tanam - Pallavi. It was here that the true classicist -traditionist in Kadri surfaced leaving aside all the performing jig-zaw. The Tanam was excellently delineated. Needless to say that Kanyakumari was once again her natural self, irrespective of her fascination for her new Violin. The Pallavi and Ragamalika Swaras did add to the excellence of the RTP.

The Thani by Guruvayur Dorai (Mridangam), N. H. Jayaraman (Kanjira) and Bangalore Rajasekhar (Morsing) presented an interesting facet as the ace Mridangist wove patterns of interesting combinations inspiring his teammates to play with intelligence and imagination.



The concluding series of Talent Promotion Programme featured artistes who are already 'stars'. Vijayalakshmi Subramaniam and V. Shankaranarayan featured during Navarathri are natural artistes, honed finely in traditional Paddhati and are at ease in performing art.

Vijayalakshmi's training under stalwarts like Shri S. Rajam, Prof. T.R. Subramaniam and Shri V. R. Krishnan has honed her to be deeply introspective and innovative. A Programme Executive of the AIR she showed a perspective in her repertoire and rendition. Though high pitched her voice is melodious and has exquisite felicity, flourish and finesse. And the performing trio, besides herself, Dr. Narmada (Violin), J. Vaidyanathan (Mridangam) made a grand team of performers.

Her Saveri in the early phase was pleasingly evocative, exploiting the Shadja Varja Prayogas. The inherent lilt in Syama Sastri's *Sankari Sankuru* was enhanced in the spontaneity of swaraprastharas. S. Rajam's hand in bringing out the elusive charm of Vivadi Mela

was perceptible in her rendering of Koteeswaralyer's *Sringara Kumara* in Varunapriya.

Two of the traditional Ragas, Kalyani and Bhairavi, she took up for major delineations bore testimony to Vijayalakshmi's versatility. With the kaleidoscopic play of tone-colours and artistically woven phrasings which reflected the enchantment as well as sustenance of the Raga, Kalyani glowed in its euphaneous beauty. Bhairavi, picturised in its traditional glory radiated its brilliance and grandeur.

*Bhajare re Chitta Balambika*, Dikshitar's monumental piece dedicated to Vaidyanatha Kshetra Devi in Kalyani was interpreted and improvised in Niraval in the spirit the Raga was picturised. And the Khanda Triputa RTP in Bhairavi, a Yati Pallavi, '*Maheswari Kavuma Uma Ma Mathangi Markathangi Mamava*' was a methodically rendered number where both Narmada and Vaidyanathan joined with equal felicity. In fact, Vaidyanathan's Thani after Kalyani revealed melodically woven intricacies in Sarvalaghu ease. He is shaping up very well playing with "Anusaranai" and Sarvalaghu. There is 'Sowkhyam' in his strides and strokes.

A Mechanical Engineer, V. Shankaranarayanan proved a seasoned artiste. Trained in the Semmangudi School by Guru Vagai Gnanaskandan, Shankaranarayanan seems to have acquired a style of his own assimilating the essence of other Banis. His home is a musical treasure house. Father Venkatasubramaniam is a musician - administrator, a Trustee of the Saraswati Vaggeyakara Trust. A constant interaction with the music world and maestros has its own advantage, especially accruing from "Kezhvi Gnana".

Shankaranarayanan has a voice that has both power and resonance, volume and fluidity. With creative instincts he explores the depths of Ragas and picturises them with aesthetic flourish. His Lalitha testified to this in the opening phase. Syama Sastri's *Nannu Brova Lalitha* naturally was invested with an elegant poignance.



Sankaranarayanan is one of the very few young artistes who could competently delineate Hindolam with such insight and involvement. The much-rendered 'Manasuloni Marmamulu' of Tygaraja was given a refreshing treatment in the thematic exposition of Niraval taking off at *Inakutabda nee Vegani*.... Another mainstay of the cutcheri was Purvikalyani and Meenakshi *memudam dehi*. It was music of self-enjoyment and performing finesse. In which the accompanists were naturally inspired to come out with their best.

Hemalatha (Violin) who has been accompanying many a talent in the promotion series along with her father-mentor Rangachari giving support on the Kanjira showed enough promise to be promoted to a major slot. She played with ease and felicity. Tiruvaidaimarudur Sankaran equally rose to the occasion with his Mridangam strides.

To sum up, the finale of the Talent Promotion Series in October was marked for melody reigning supreme. The inauguration of the Tower Block Convention Hall for Sangeet with veteran T.K. Govinda Rao presenting an intellectual music followed by the 'Talents' with extraordinary prowess and promise augured well for concerts as the following musical event testified to.

The Talent Exposure concerts the Shanmukhanda Sabha has been organising regularly, presenting the students of its Sangeetha Vidyalaya as a "Concert Practice" session, had two youngsters in November who showed promise.

Little Ramakrishnan sweetly twanged the hearts of his listeners while making his bow on the concert stage. Pretty small for his age, he showed ample confidence and competence to play on the Violin. His bowing was soft and sweet and his fingering clear and melodic. Starting with Sri Raga Varnam, he played Annamachaya's *Vandeham* (Hamsadhvani), *Devadeva* (Mayamalavagoula), Tyagaraja's

*Bhavanutha* (Mohanam) and *Sarasa Sama Dana Bhedadanda Chatura*, (Kapinarayani), concluding with lilting *Teerada Vilayatup pillai*. His short Mohana, crisp Swaraprastharas showed his aptitude for Alapana and Kalpana Swaras.

Here is a child artiste who is sure to make strides. He is in the right hands of Smt. Visalam Vageeswar, a traditionist who has trained him well and guiding him on the right direction. K. Kumar (student of Shri T. S. Nandakumar) who has accompanied at all levels of talent presentations, enhanced the concert quality giving the percussion support.

Another quality 'Exposure' concert was by V. Ramaswamy, a student of Engineering, who is equally interested in learning both the science and art of classical music studying for his Diploma in Music (KVC) of the University of Mumbai and presently being trained for practicals by Jt. Director Kalyani Sharma. Ramaswamy has had training under many teachers, such as Smt. Kamala Parameswaran, Smt. T. R. Balamani and Smt. Susheela Mani under whom he still continues to learn.

Endowed with a good, felicitous voice he has done his home work well with discipline. There is a creative impulse that takes him well on the improvisatory path. The Ragas of Dharmavathi and Sankarabharanam he dwelt in detail showed his enthusiasm and energy. However a slight overemphasis on Nishada for instance led to nuances of Kalyani in Dharmavathi. Such flights of imagination could easily be corrected once he keeps his ears and mind open to the science of Ragas. His *Bhajanaseyarada* was neatly rendered with good Niraval - Swaras.

Sankarabharanam was measured and methodical and developed melodiously too. *Akshayalingavibho* shaped up well in a major suite.

Earlier he impressed with *Sri Maha Ganapathim* (Nattai) appended with brisk paced Swaras, *Anupama Gunambudhi* (Atana)

and *Entarani* (Harikambhoji). (His Harikambhoji too required some trimming as he unwittingly got into the Gandhara a shade different!) His Tukkadas were equally good.

Lakshmipriya, a student of Sangeetha Bhushanam T. S. Krishnaswami and his disciple Smt. Visalam Vageeswar, and who had a stint in training the freshers at the Vidyalaya (she had recently cleared her Shanmukha Sangeetha Mani Certificate Examination) accompanied on the Violin amiably. Kumar's Mridangam was adequately inspiring.

The series of Vaggeyakara Days for the year commenced with Deepavali on which day Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar shed his mortal coils 161 years ago. After celebration of the festival in the morning it was a solemn Sangeetanjali in the evening where major chunk was taken by the students of the Sabha's Vidyalaya.

The Sangeetanjali commenced with a Veena duet by Janaki Krishnamoorthy and L. Subramaniam (students of Smt. Kalyani Sharma) both of whom cleared the Examination held for Shanmukha Sangeetha Mani certificate. They played *Sri Maha Ganapathi* (Gowla), *Saraswati* (Hindolam), *Bhajare re Chitta* (Kalyani) - which seems to have reappeared in the concert circuit this season after a lull and *Kanchadatayadalshi* (Kamalamanohari) - showing good Patanthara and meticulous clarity. Sriram's Sangat on Mridangam had a melodious ring.

The percussion accompanists for all the sessions were students of T. S. Nandakumar.

Ranjani - Subha - Gurumani Krishnan (students of Smt. Meera Nathan) accompanied by V. Anand (being trained by R. Madhavan) on the Violin, Santosh Chander (Mridangam) and Sriram (Kanjira) rendered an Abhayamba Navavarnam *Jaya Jaya Abhayambikayam* (Sankarabharanam) besides *Sri Sarasvathi* (Suddha Saveri), *Varadarajam* (Saranga) and *Mathangi* (Ramamanohari). The renditions mostly were in middle-tempo.

Rajalakshmi Rajan, yet another student of the Vidyalaya was in a fine form, presenting a couple of 'new finds' from Dikshitar's repertoire such as "*Jaya Jaya Lakshmi*" (Hindolam), and *Sri Madhurapuri Viharini* (Bilahari), along with the well known *Ahilandeswari* (Dwijavanti) and *Sri Kanthimathi* (Hemavathi). She has a melodious voice and felicitous range. She has had her training under Smt. Padma at Delhi (Vidwan O. V. Subramaniam's daughter) and is now under Smt. Prema Krishnan. Given proper guidance she should come up as a promising performer. Satish Krishnamoorthy and Sriram were the percussion pair while Anand played on the Violin.

Radha Santhanam, a product of the Central College of Karnatic Music, Madras, has resumed her musical career after a gap of several years. Though she has to restore the sheen of her voice and repertoire, she sang with passion in a somewhat open-throated vocalism - *Parandamavathi* (Dharmavati), *Pahimam* (Mohanam) *Anandamritha Karshini* (Amruthavarshini). She is under the tutelage of Smt. Kalyani Sharma now. Accompanying her was Parvathy Shankar (Violin) and Sriram (Mridangam).

Smt. Subha Kailas (who was initiated into music by her mother and trained by Shri T. S. Anantharaman and Shri P. N. Krishnamoorthy) presented in the style of Pracheena Paddhati. She has a good voice and with more Sadhaka could do better. Her repertoire comprised *Vallabha Nayakasya* (Begada), *Akshayalingavibho* (Sankarabharanam), *Sri Lakshmi Varaham* (Abhogi) etc. Anand and Satish Krishnamoorthy provided the Sangat.

Shri Nandakumar paid his Anjali too with a Kriti of the savant.

The other Vaggeyakara who was remembered, was Maharaja Swati Tirunal (on 29/12/96). In this Anjali that happened to be a concluding programme of the year, a majority of Smt. T. R. Balamani's students participated. The Pataantara patent was there. While some



tried to overlay it, one stuck to it with a natural ease.

Radhika Subramaniam made her mark singing with a practised ease and competence. Her voice has gained in felicity and flourish and has acquired a lustre. Her *Pahipankaja* (Useni), *Kripayapalaya* (Charukesi), *Aliveni* (Kurinji padam) and a Hindustani *Chaliye Kunjanume* (Brindavani) reflected the forms of compositions the Maharaja dealt with.

Meera Mahadevan, who is shaping up as an amiable accompanist supported her on the Violin while a senior Mridangist Shri Raghavan provided the Mridangam support.

S. R. Venkatesh who has been featured in the Sabha's Talent Promotion Programme, had all the makings of a performer. Only his voice was not so co-operative. There was yet some sensitive musical moments when he sang the Maharaja's Navarathri Kirti *Devi Jagajjanani* (Sankarabharanam). The other two were *Deva Deva-s* in Mayamalavagowla and Purvi Kalyani. Accompanying him on the Violin was V. Anand who is picking up the art of accompanying. He was the opener of the Day's Anjali Programmes. Having had early training under Smt. Janaki Subramaniam, he is now under Shri P. N. Krishnamoorthy. His is an open-throated vocalism and he presented *Pankaja Lochana* (Kalyani), *Krupaya* (Charukesi), *Paripalayamam* (Reethigaula) and *Sarajanbha* (Chakravakam). Meera Mahadevan and Raghavan gave good support.

Suresh Krishnaswamy's voice is his power. Rich and resonant it has flourish and felicity. But tempted into overmuch frills it tends to be counter productive, at times intruding into Raga nuances. With certain restraint Suresh can easily overcome this and make his music truly appealing, reflecting its resplendence, and making his mentor Balamani proud.

His *Sri Kumara* (Atana), *Sarasijanabha* (Todi) and *Rama Rama* (Simhenūramadhyamam) were good selections and had mo-

ments of excellence despite a few frills off mark. Anand-Raghavan pair enjoyed their Sangat.

Young Sujatha Nair who is making strides both in Bharata Natyam and Karnatak music showed her competence adhering to the paataanthara. Starting with Kapi Varnam *Sumasayaka*, she rendered *Rama Rama* (Bhupalam), *Mamavasada* (Kanada), a Hindi Bhajan and concluded with a Padam *'Alarsara Parithapam* (Suruti). Anand and Narayanan Namboodiri were the supporting artistes.

Bhavani Srinivasan, a product of the Sabha Vidyalaya and a Diplomate had voice problem but managed to pay her Anjali with the violinist Meera Mahadevan and Sriram-Kumar's Mridangam -Kanjira giving solid support. Her fare comprised *Paramapurusha* (Vasantha), *Paripalayamam* (Reethigowla), *Pranayam Santhatam* (Hemavati) and *Sarasijanabha* (Todi).

It was heartening to note that none resorted to script singing.



The 114th birth anniversary of Subramania Bharatiyar this time was celebrated on December 8 on different strokes. A programme entirely by the students of the Sabha's Sangeetha Vidyalaya, nearly sixty students participating under the guidance, preparation and direction of a dozen faculty members, the repertoire represented not only different facets of the Mahakavi's creations but also their adaptability to different forms of composition. Ghana Panchaka Pada Varnam, Keertana, Ragamalika, Virutham, Kavadihindu, devotionals - all forms found a place in the Anjali to Mahakavi. If he himself was a poet of vision and a musician of merit, his creations for their lilt and lyrics inspired the musician-teachers to tune them to various forms. The result; refreshing renditions of the Kavi's poems. Many of the selections were rare brought to light, maybe for the first time, while those rendered in instrumental ensembles were popular hits.

Following is the Programme - list of songs, the Faculty tunesmiths and student presenters :-

The Repertoire	Tunesmith	Presenters
Prayer - Mangala Ganapathi (Preceded by Virutham)	Smt. Meera Nathan	Subha & Ranjani
Enakku Vendum Varangalai.... (Selection from "Vinayakar Agaval" Ragamalika)	Smt. Ganga Ramachander	Anjani, Bhama, Mala, Kripa & Sindhu
Kannan Piranthan (Ragamalika)	Smt. Ganga Ramachander	Aarti, Anusha, Harsha, Karthi, Ravishankar, Renuka & Senthil
Jaya Jaya Bhavani (Ragamalika)	Smt. Ganga Ramachander	Balasubramaniam, Muralidharan, Shine, Vasudevan & Venugopal
Endaiyum Tayum & Kani Nilam Vendum (Ragamalika)	Smt. Prema Krishnan	Aparna, Divya, Ganesh, Gopalakrishnan, Jaya, Mahalakshmi, Radha, Rajalakshmi, Shalini, Sameer & Sudhakaran
Chinnan Chiru Kiliye - by Veena Trio	Trained by Smt. Janaki Natarajan	Vaidyanathan, Radhiika, Chitra
Kannan Mananilaye & Ketta Pozhudil Porul Koduppan	Smt. R. Sakuntala	Balatripurasundari, Indumathi, Padma, Prasad & Vasanti
Bharata Samutayam Vazhgave - Violin Quintet	Trained by Smt. Visalam Vageeswar	LakshmiPriya, Ramakrishnan, Pradeep, Sudarshan & SriVidya
Aaththi choodi Vellai Kamalaththile - Ragamalika Vilinaiyoththa - Kavadi Chindu	Smt. Meera Nathan	Subha & Ranjani
Veeraththiru Vizhip parvaiyum.... Gana Panchaka Pada Varnam Orchestra	Jt. Director Smt. Kalyani Sharma	Veena - Janaki Krishnamoorthy, Raghavendra, Subramanian, Ranjani Violin : LakshmiPriya, Ramakrishnan Mridangam : L. Shankar Kanjira : Sriram Vocal : Rajalakshmi, Aparna, Sameer, Padma, Vidya and Vasanti.

The accompanying artistes for Vocal presentations were : Violin : LakshmiPriya & Ramakrishnan  
Mridangam : Devanand Menon (student of Smt., Jayalakshmi G.)  
Mridangam & Kanjira : L. Shankar & Sriram (Student of Shri T. S. Nandakumar )  
Tabla : Harpreet Singh (Student of Shri Milind Joshi).

Overall Production - in-charge & Direction

Dr. Sulochana Rajendran - Director

Smt. Kalyani Sharma - Jt. Director



## " STARS" ON THE AIR

The twin concerts held by All India Radio on November 17, 1996, at Chembur Fire Arts auditorium, in commemoration of Chembai Birth centenary were a welcome change. The artistes presented were Jayashree Arvind (Veena) and V. Vamanam (Vocal), both from Mumbai and of the younger group, who have made their mark in the performing forum.

Disciple of Sangeetha Kalanidhi K.S. Narayanaswamy, Jayashree displayed mature artistry with tonal precision and imagination. Her Swara Suddham and Manodharma came to fore in her Alapana of Kharaharapriya which she played following her opening kriti of Puliur Doraiswami Iyer, *Sarasiru hasanapriye* (Natai). The choice of the her Niraval stance, the very refrain (Pallavi) of *Rama Nee Samana mevaru*, wherein Tyagaraja extols the peerless divinity of Lord Rama was apt and her Swaraprasthara slick and sweet, never exceeding the limit.

After a brisk rendition of Diskhiar's *Kanchada layathakshi* (Kamala Manohari), she took up Purvikalyani in a major Ragam-Tanam suite is a prelude to *Meenakshi memudam dehi*, another of Dikshitar's monumental piece. Her fingers dancing on the dulcet Veena made the audience sway with the Raga. Her Niraval and Swaras, the consistency of Kalapramana throughout the concert spoke of her prowess and mastery over the instrument, not easily acquired. One felt the time constraint and wished the concert - duration were extended.

The 'Thani Avarthana' by P. S. Sriram (Mridangam) and S. Sriram (Kanjira) was short and sweet.

The Vocal concert by Vamanan (a disciple of Alathur Panchapakesa Iyer), accompanied by S. Ramachandran (Violin) started off with Tyagaraja's *Siva Siva Siva yana rada* (Pantu-Varali). His Alapana of Valaji, next, was superb and his rendering of Muthiah Bhagavathar's *Jalandara* with Swaraprastharas showed his confidence and mastery over the Raga. Following an impressive presentation of Papanasam Sivan's *Samikku Sari Evvare* (Kedaragowla), he dwelt on a Bhava-Purita Alapana of Todi for the Saint's *Koluvamaregada*. One could notice the significant absence of the repetitive Sangathees of Anupallavi and Charanam which bear no relevance to the meaning of the song. It was heartening to see the young artiste adopt such careful finesse to preserve the purity of the song.

The Thani by T. S. Nandakumar (Mridangam) and Raghavendra Prakash (Ghatam) was well received.

Vamanan rounded off with a Sloka from Narayaneeyam so dear to the late Sangita Samrat Chembai. Strung in a Ragamalika of Atana, Suruti and Madyamavati the Sloka was soulful.

- Janaki Swamy



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Programmes co-sponsored by  
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### 3 - DAY NEW YEAR DANCE & DRAMA FESTIVAL

18-1-1997  
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Bharatanatyam by Kum. Smitha Madhav - Hyderabad  
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19-1-1997  
Sunday  
6.00 p.m.

Dance Ballet "DASAVATHARAM"  
Produced & Directed by eminent Dance Exponent  
Smt. Jayashree Nair (Mumbai)

20-1-1997  
Monday  
7.15 P.M.

Tamil Drama "ILLATHIN EKKANGAL" by the  
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Produced & Directed by Smt. Gnanam, the playwright.

(A soul-stirring Drama highlighting the problems and difficulties encountered by old people in their families and in Old Age Homes and conveys the signal not to send old people to Old Age Homes.)

### 2-DAY SPRING FESTIVAL OF MUSIC AT PANDAL

15-3-1997  
16-3-1997

Shri P. Unnikrishnan  
Sangeetha Kalanidhi Dr. N. Ramanl  
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Mannargudi Eswaran - V. Nagerajan  
Vocal Recital  
Flute Recital

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## 2-Day Margazhi "Tiruppavai" & "Divya Prabhandam" Tamil Isai Festival

By Sangeetha Vidwan Arulicheyal Thilakam & Tiruppavai Chelvar  
 (Disciple of the Great Maestro **Shri M. N. Venkata Varadhan** of Madras  
 with commentary by "**Sankeerthana**" **Shri Kanchipuram Naina Pillai**  
 "Aandal Thodutha Tamizharam" **Shri A. Parthasarathy** of Madras  
 Tiruppavai

11-1-1997 Saturday 6.00 p.m. *Divya Prabhandam*

12-1-1997 Sunday 6.00 p.m. "Naalayirathil Navarasangal" and accompanied by *Violin*  
*Mridangam*  
 Shri V. Balakrishnan  
 Shri N. H. Jayaram

### National Integration Programmes to mark Republic Day Celebrations Hindustani & Karnatic Music Recitals

26-1-1997 Sunday 7.00 p.m. **Ms. Deepa Ranganath (Delhi)** *Hindustani Vocal*  
 (Disciple of the renowned Maestro  
 Ustad Dilshad Khan & Ms. Parween Sultana)  
 Shri Shantaram Jadhav *Harmonium*  
 Shri Mukund Rajdev *Tabla*

7.15 p.m. to 9.15 p.m. The popular Singer of Mumbai *Carnatic Music*  
**Shri Shankar Mahadevan & Party** *Recital*  
 (Disciple of the Veteran Guru Smt. T. R. Balamani of Mumbai)

### Vaggeyakara Days: A Two-Day Saint Thyagaraja 150th Aaradhana Celebrations

28-1-1997 Tuesday 8.30 a.m. "AARADHANA DAY" - Goshti Ganam of the Saint's immortal "PANCHARATNA KRITIS" by the Teachers & Students of the Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya and Bombay - based Vidwans & Vidwamsinis

### 7.00 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. Geethanjali Concerts

29-1-1997 Wednesday 7.00 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. **Sangeethanjali** by Students of Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya - A new dimension  
 ♦ Selections from "**Prahalada Bhakti Vijayam**"  
 ♦ Veena Trio ♦ Violin Trio  
 ♦ **Srirangam Pancharatnam** ♦ **Anjaneya Utsavam**

15-2-1997 Saturday 6.00 to 9.00 p.m. **Saint Purandaradasa Day**  
 Dasanjali with Dasar Namas

16-2-1997 Sunday 6.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. **Syama Sastri Day** *Vocal Recital*  
 Special Programme by **Smt. Geeta Raja**  
 (A product of Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya under Vidwan **Shri S. Ramachandran**, **Smt. Geeta** also belongs to the Sishya Parampara of Sangeetha Kalanidhi **Smt. T. Brinda**)  
 Shri R. Madhavan *Violin*  
 Shri Sriram Subbaraman *Mridangam*  
 Shri Sriram Suryanarayanan *Kanjira*  
 ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

23-2-1997 6.00 -9.00 p.m. **Sri Papanasam Sivan Day**  
 Gananjali  
 Venue : Shanmukhananda Tower

**S. Seshadri**  
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## Book Review

### FRAGRANT GARLAND

*The Fragrant Garland* (Biographical Dictionary of Carnatic Composers & Musicians).  
 Book IV. By N. Rajagopalan (I. A. S. Retd) Published by Carnatic Classics,  
 Madras - 20. 1996. Pages 416, Price Rs 260/-

It is really heartening to note that a reviewer, rather a researcher's plea that the scope of *Garlands* be widened, that it may cross the north of Vindhya, has been heeded to. The Garlander Shri Rajagopalan has taken "a brief peep into the realm of the Hindustani's musicians". Sure, the pick of stalwarts brought to light enhances the beauty of *The Fragrant Garland*. And once the fragrance has crossed over the north of Vindhya would it be long before it swept over the world.

As aptly observed by Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, the Bhisma of Karnatak music, Shri Rajagopalan took up (single handed) the pioneering work which Government and Universities should have undertaken. And where from did he draw the inspiration for such an Himalayan task!. You may hear it in his own words.

Early in 1988, I was browsing through books in the British Council Library, Madras. I happened to see Slonimsky's Biographical Dictionary of Western Musicians and similar works of Oxford, Bayers, etc. To my utter amazement, I learnt that Classical Carnatic music and even Indian music had no such biographical work. Since none had done it, I decided to take up the work myself.

A providential ordain, indeed !.

It is a phenomenal achievement. He seems to have quenched his thirst for research in the articles he has penned. The author's deep veneration and love of the Bharatis, both of Narimanam and Ettayapuram, and the Trinity result in more and more evaluative outpourings which are masterpieces of musical essays.

There are passages which are a thrill to read and relish. One does not stop admiring his style of writing, the flourish and flow, the lucidity and lustre of language while one gains in knowledge of musical history and analysis.

Example : his narration of Syama Sastri's memorable musical contest with Bobbili Kesavayya who assumed the "Samsonian title" of "Bhooloka Chapa Chutti" :

And he was no demon: but a Ghana Vidwan of proven merit and fabulous fame... His Digvijaya took him to Thanjavur, then the high seat of art., architecture, sculpture and music. Kesavayya's ardent ambition was to hoist the flag of his success at that Wimbeldon of Music.. He threw the usual challenge. Alas! Little was he aware that it was to prove to be his Waterloo. Rajah Serfoji requested Syama Sastri of the Carnatic Classical Trinity to enter and save the prestige of Thanjavur Court.

The memorable contest saw Kesavayya handling the longest of Talas with a baffling 128 Aksaras (unit measures of time), the famous Simhanandara Tala presumably banking on its high number of Aksaras per Avartta and also its numeral segmental break-up into six Gurus (8 Aksaras each), six Chatusra Laghus (4 Aksharas each), three Plutams (12 Aksharas each), two Drutams (2 Aksaras each) and one Kakapadam (16 Aksaras). Surely he should have expected to confound his opponent. (The Bobbili Larwood would not have dreamt of a Bradman taking a Bat!) It was his ill-luck that brought Tala Prastara Syama Sastri into musical arena to face him. Sastri framed and invoked Sarabhanandana Tala which had only 79 Aksaras per Avartta. The herculean contest saw Sastri win and Kesavayya fading out.



## குழல் மேதையின் நினைவாஞ்சலி

(சென்னை ஸங்கீத வித்வத் ஸபையின் 70-வது மகாநாட்டின் தலைவர் புல்லாங்குழல் வித்வான் Dr. N. ரமணி அவர்களின் தலைமையுரையிலிருந்து)

ஓவ்வோர் இசைக் கலைஞனுக்கும் ஸங்கீத வித்வத் ஸபையினால் கௌரவிக்கப்பட வேண்டுமென்று ஆவல் ஏற்படுவது இயற்கையாகும். சென்ற 70 ஆண்டுகளாக ஸங்கீத வித்வத் ஸபை இசைக்கலைக்கு ஆற்றி வரும் தொண்டிற்கு உலகிலேயே ஈடு இல்லை என்று கூறினால் மிகையாகாது. எத்தனையோ மகா வித்வான்களையும், விதுஷிகளையும் வித்வத் சபையார் ஆதரித்து வருவதுடன், ஆண்டு விழாவில் அவர்களுக்குப் பட்டங்கள் முதலியவற்றை வழங்கி கௌரவிப்பது சாலச் சிறந்த பணியாகும். இந்த 70வது மகா நாட்டின் தலைவனாக என்னைத் தேர்ந்தெடுத்து அகாடாமியார் கௌரவிப்பதை எனது குருநாதர்களுடைய பாதங்களில் வைத்து அவர்களுடைய ஆசியுடன் ஏற்றுக் கொள்ளுகிறேன். வித்வத் சபையாருக்கு எனது மனமார்ந்த நன்றி.

இந்த விழாவிற்கு தமிழக முதலமைச்சர் கலைஞர் கருணாநிதி அவர்கள் தலைமை வகிப்பது என்னுடைய பெரும் பாக்யமாகவே கருதுகிறேன். இப் பெரியார் ஒரு சிறந்த அரசியல்வாதியாகவும், நிர்வாகி ஆகவும் இருப்பதுடன் இலக்கியத்திலும், இசை முதலிய அரும் கலைகளிலும் சிறந்து விளங்குவதால் மக்களால் 'கலைஞர்' என்றே அழைக்கப்படுகிறார். அவருடைய குடும்பமே இசை மரபில் வந்ததாகும்.

நாங்கள் இருவரும் பிறந்து வளர்ந்த ஊர் ஒன்றே என்பதை நினைக்கும் பொழுது எனக்கு அளவு கடந்த பெருமை ஏற்படுகிறது. கலைஞர் அவர்கள் முன்னர் முதலமைச்சராக இருந்த காலத்தில் தான் எனக்கு கலைமாமணி பட்டமும், முத்தமிழ் பேர்வை விருதும் அவரது கையினால் அளிக்கப் பெற்றன என்பதை நினைக்கும் போது எனக்கு பெருமகிழ்ச்சி உண்டாகிறது.

உலகின் பல பாகங்களிலும் சங்கீதத்தின் வளர்ச்சியில் இசைக் கருவிகள் முக்கியமான இடத்தைப் பெற்று வருகின்றன. இசைக்கு ஆதாரமான சுருதி, ஸ்வரம் முதலியவற்றை பாகுபாடு செய்வதற்கு வீணை முதலிய இசைக் கருவிகளே உபயோகப்படுத்தப்பட்டன.

பாரத நாட்டின் பழம் பெரும் இசைக்கருவிகள், வீணை, வேணு, மிருதங்கம் ஆகியவையாகும். இந்த மூன்று கருவிகளுள் மிகப் பழமையானது புல்லாங்குழல் என்பதற்கு பல சான்றுகள் உள்ளன. மூங்கில் காடுகளில் வண்டுகளால் துளைக்கப்பட்ட துவாரத்தின் வழியாக காற்றுப் புகுந்த பொழுது உண்டான ஒலியைக் கேட்டு ஆதி மனிதன் புல்லாங்குழலைக் கண்டு பிடித்தான் என்று காளிதாஸன் கூறுகிறார். இந்தக் கருவி வேணு, முரளி, வம்சீ, துணவம் முதலிய பெயர்களாலும் அழைக்கப்படுகிறது. இதில் குறுங்குழல், நெடுங்குழல் என்று பல வகைகள் உள்ளன.

The whole Chapter "Mystery Behind the epic success of Syama Sastri" is worth quoting as the author dwells in detail of Syama Sastri's choice of the Tala of lesser Aksaras (with special significance based on Sthalapurana) to confront his opponent who banked on sheer length and number of Aksharas.

Many are the Chapters which are enlightening and very useful to the students of music in their academics. The biographical details of Saint Tyagaraja, his Panchratna Kritis, the discussion whether he is a Saint or a Poet, "Ranjayati Iti Raga" etc., are of great value.

The fragrance of this Garland wafts through regions which have made great strides and significant contribution to the evolution and enrichment of Karnatak music. From Kaveri region, where the Trinity reigned supreme and rained soulful Sangeeth, the fragrance moves on to Mysore bringing out profiles of Mysore Sadasiv Rao Bakshi Subbanna, R.K. Venkatarama Sastri and Sangeetha Kalanidhi, R.K. Srikantan.

Then it is the "Pancharatnas" among Tamil composers - Muthu Thandavar, Papanasam Mudaliar, Arunchala Kavirayar, Marimutha Pillai and Gopalakrishna Bharati - whose contribution towards enrichment of Tamil Isai in Keertanas, Padams and Opera makes a significant landmark in the history of Kartanak music. As earlier mentioned the "peep into the Hindustani realm" makes a harmonious beginning.

Underneath pleasing fragrance there is however poignance that dogs the music world and the author brings it to light with graphic precision. "Travails and Tribulations of an Artiste" and "Voice of Melody Cries" moves you.

Some more artistes list, anecdotes, incidents, musings and memories and usual plithy fillers are there. And each has its own aura.

### Titles & Honours

Here is a "quotable quote" for the Garlander on

Some are born to receive honours and titles and some have them thrust on their selves while some run after with or without success. When a high honour is conferred on a dignitary artiste, how does he react? Here is what T.S. Elliot (1888-1965) said in his acceptance speech on the conferment of Nobel Prize for Literature in 1948:

When I began to think of what I should say to you this evening, I wished only to express very simply my appreciation of the high honour which the Swedish Academy has thought fit to confer on me. But to do this adequately proved no simple task: my business is with the words; yet the words were beyond my command! Merely to indicate that I was aware of having received the highest international honour would be only to say what everyone knows already. To profess my own unworthiness would be to cast doubt upon the wisdom of the academy: to praise the Academy might suggest that I, as a literary critic, approved the recognition given to myself as a poet! May I therefore, ask that it be taken for granted that I experienced, on learning of the award to myself, all the normal emotions of exaltation and vanity, that any human being might be expected to feel at such a moment, with enjoyment of the flattery and public figure?... Since the Noble award is different in kind to any other, the expression of one's feelings calls for resources which language cannot supply....

How did our vidwans feel, react and behave when they were blest with the title Sangita Kalanidhi?

-R.S.



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இந்தியாவில் புல்லாங்குழலுக்கு ஏற்பட்டுள்ள பெருமைக்கு அது கிருஷ்ண பகவான் வாசித்து வந்த வாத்யம் என்பதேயாகும்.

கண்ணன் குழலூதியபோது அண்ட சராசரங்களும் மயங்கின என்றும் மாந்தர்களைத் தவிர, விலங்குகளும், மரம், செடி, கொடிகளும் அசைவற்று நின்றன என்றும் பாகவதம் கூறுகிறது. அறுபத்து மூன்று நாயன்மார்களில் ஒருவரான ஆனாயநாயனார் குழல் ஊதிய பொழுது பசுக்கள் மயங்கிக் கிடந்தன என்று "பெரிய புராண"த்திலிருந்து நாம் அறிகிறோம்.

நான் குழல் வாசிப்பதிலேயே ஈடுபட்டிருக்கும் ஒரு குடும்பத்தைச் சேர்ந்தவன். எனது பாட்டனார் ஆழியூர் நாராயணசாமி அய்யர் அக்காலத்தில் குழல் வாசிப்பதில் மகா வித்வானாக விளங்கியவர். சிறுவனாக இருந்த பொழுதே நான் அவரிடம் பயிற்சி பெற்றேன். அதுவே எனக்கு அஸ்திவாரமாக அமைந்தது. பின்னர் எனக்கு குருவாக விளங்கியவர் என்று நெருங்கிய உறவினரான அமரர் டி.ஆர்.மகாலிங்கம் ஆவார். இவருடைய வாசிப்பை இங்கு வந்திருக்கும் பல ரஸிகப் பெருமக்கள் நேரிலேயே கேட்டிருக்கலாம். குழல் வாசிப்பதில் பால்ய மேதையாக விளங்கிய மாலி அவர்களுடைய வாசிப்பு கற்பனைக்கு எட்டாத விவகாரம் நிறைந்தது. சுருதி சுத்தம், லயக் கட்டுப்பாடு, மனோதர்மம் முதலியவற்றால் அவர் இணையற்று விளங்கினார்.

எட்டாவது வயதிலேயே எனக்கு அரங்கேற்றம் ஆகி நான் கச்சேரிகள் செய்ய ஆரம்பித்தேன். திருவாரூரில் கல்வி பயின்று வந்த நான் விடுமுறைக் காலங்களில் சென்னைக்கு வந்து மாலி அவர்களிடம் சிஷ்யனாக அமர்ந்து மேலும் பயிற்சி பெற்றேன். எனக்கு பதினொரு வயது ஆன பொழுது சென்னை ரசிக ரஞ்சனி சபையில் எனக்கு குருவுடன் சேர்ந்து வாசிக்கும் பேரதிர்ஷ்டம் கிடைத்தது. அவருடைய இணையில்லாத பாணியையும் நான் ஓரளவு கற்றுக் கொண்டேன். ஆகவே நான் ஒவ்வொரு முறையும் கச்சேரியை ஆரம்பிக்கும் பொழுது மானஸீகமாக எனது குருநாதர்களை வணங்குவது வழக்கம்.

இவர்களைத் தவிர, வாய்ப்பாட்டு, இசைக்கருவிகள் ஆகிய துறைகளில் ஒளி பெற்று விளங்கிய பல மகா வித்வான்களுடைய ஸங்கீதத்தை நீண்ட காலம் கேட்டு, அனுபவித்து, அதன் சிறப்பான அம்சங்கள் பலவற்றை அடிப்படையாகக் கொண்டு உருவானது எனது பாணி என்பதைப் பணிவுடன் கூற விரும்புகிறேன்.

இந்த அகாடமியில் முதல் முதலாக கச்சேரி செய்யும் வாய்ப்பு 1956ல் கிடைத்தது. அப்பொழுது எனக்கு வயது 22. அந்த ஆண்டிலிருந்து வித்வத் சபையார் எனக்குப் பேராதரவு அளித்து வருவது தான் என்னுடைய முன்னேற்றத்திற்கு முக்கிய காரணமாக அமைந்தது. அதைத் தொடர்ந்து மற்ற பல சபையார் என்னை ஆதரித்து வருகின்றனர். அதன் சிகரமாக இந்த 70 வது மகாநாட்டிற்கு தலைமை வகிக்க என்னை தேர்ந்தெடுத்ததற்கு நான் மிகவும் கடமைப்பட்டுள்ளேன். இத்தனை ஆண்டுகளாக நான் அகாடமியில் 'ஸோலோ' கச்சேரி தான் செய்து கொண்டு வருகிறேன்.



இன்று முக்கியமான ஒரு விஷயத்தைக் கூற விரும்புகிறேன். நாற்பது ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன் நான் அகாடமியில் கச்சேரி செய்த பொழுது பக்கவாத்யம் வாசித்த வயலின் வித்வான் வி.வி.சுப்ரமணியன் அவர்களும், மிருதங்கம் வாசித்த திருச்சி சங்கரன் அவர்களும் இன்று மகா வித்வான்களாக விளங்கி வருகிறார்கள். இந்த விழாவில் எனது இசை நிகழ்ச்சிக்கு இந்த இரு வித்வான்களும் பக்கவாத்யம் வாசிப்பதை நான் மிகவும் பெருமையாகக் கருதுகிறேன்.

சென்ற 50 ஆண்டுகளுக்கு மேலாக இசைக் கலைக்குத் தொண்டு புரிந்து வரும் நான் சில ஆராய்ச்சிகளை நடத்தி புதிய அம்சங்கள் சிலவற்றையும் அறிமுகம் செய்திருக்கிறேன். வட இந்தியாவின் பான்ஸூரி என்ற நீண்ட புல்லாங்குழலை முதன் முதலாக கர்நாடக சங்கீதத்திற்கு அறிமுகம் செய்து அதன் மூலம் புதிய இசை முறையை வழங்கி வருகிறேன்.

இந்துஸ்தானி குழல் வித்வான்களுடன் சேர்ந்து வாசிக்கும் ஜுகல்பந்தி என்ற நிகழ்ச்சியையும், அறிமுகம் செய்தேன். மேலும் ஐரோப்பிய நாட்டுக் குழல் கலைஞர்களுடன் சேர்ந்து வாசித்த அனுபவமும் உண்டு. 1983ல் ரமணி அகாடமி ஆப் ப்ளூட் என்ற ஸ்தாபனத்தை ஆரம்பித்து சுமார் 50க்கு மேற்பட்ட கலைஞர்களை இந்தியாவிலும், வெளிநாடுகளிலும் உருவாக்கியுள்ளேன். முப்பதுக்கு மேற்பட்ட முறை வெளிநாடுகளுக்குச் சென்று பல இசை விழாக்களில் கலந்து கொண்டு புல்லாங்குழல் வழியாகக் கர்நாடக சங்கீதத்தின் பெருமையை மேல் நாடுகளில் பரப்பிய வாய்ப்பு கிடைத்ததற்கு நான் பெருமைப்படுகிறேன்.

கர்நாடக சங்கீதத்திற்கு தஞ்சை மாவட்டமே தாயகமென்று இசை வல்லுனர்கள் கூறுகிறார்கள். அதிலும் முக்கியமாக புல்லாங்குழல் வாசிக்கும் கலையில் இந்த மாவட்டமே சிறந்து வளங்குகிறது. மகா மேதைகளாக விளங்கிய சரப சாஸ்திரிகள், நாகராஜராவ், கோபாலய்யர், எனது குருநாதர்களாகிய ஆழியூர் நாராயணசாமி அய்யர், டி. ஆர். மகாலிங்கம் முதலிய பல வித்வான்கள் தஞ்சை மாவட்டத்தைச் சேர்ந்தவர்கள் ஆவர். இத்தகைய பெருமை வாய்ந்த ஒரு வாத்யத்தின் மரபையும், புனிதத் தன்மையையும் பாதுகாத்து, அதற்குரிய கௌரவத்தையும், பெருமையையும் அளிப்பது சங்கீத உலகத்தின் கடமை என்பதே எனது வேண்டுகோள்.

நான் இந்தத் துறையில் அடைந்திருக்கும் முன்னேற்றத்திற்கு என்னுடன் ஒத்துழைத்து பலவித உதவிகளைப் புரிந்த வித்வான் அனைவருக்கும் நன்றி கூற கடமைப்பட்டுள்ளேன். பல ஆண்டுகளாக என்னுடைய கச்சேரிகளை பத்திரிகைகளில் விமரிசனம் செய்து எனக்கு ஊக்கம் அளித்த சங்கீத விமரிசர்கள் அனைவருக்கும், அன்று முதல் இன்று வரை என்னை ஆதரித்து வரும் ரஸிகப் பெருமக்களுக்கும் எனது மனமார்ந்த நன்றி.

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